Wiltshire's Homeless Data Review 2018 - 2019

Home as a main setting for health

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

ACCESS TO SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND INCLUSION

Source CIEH 2015
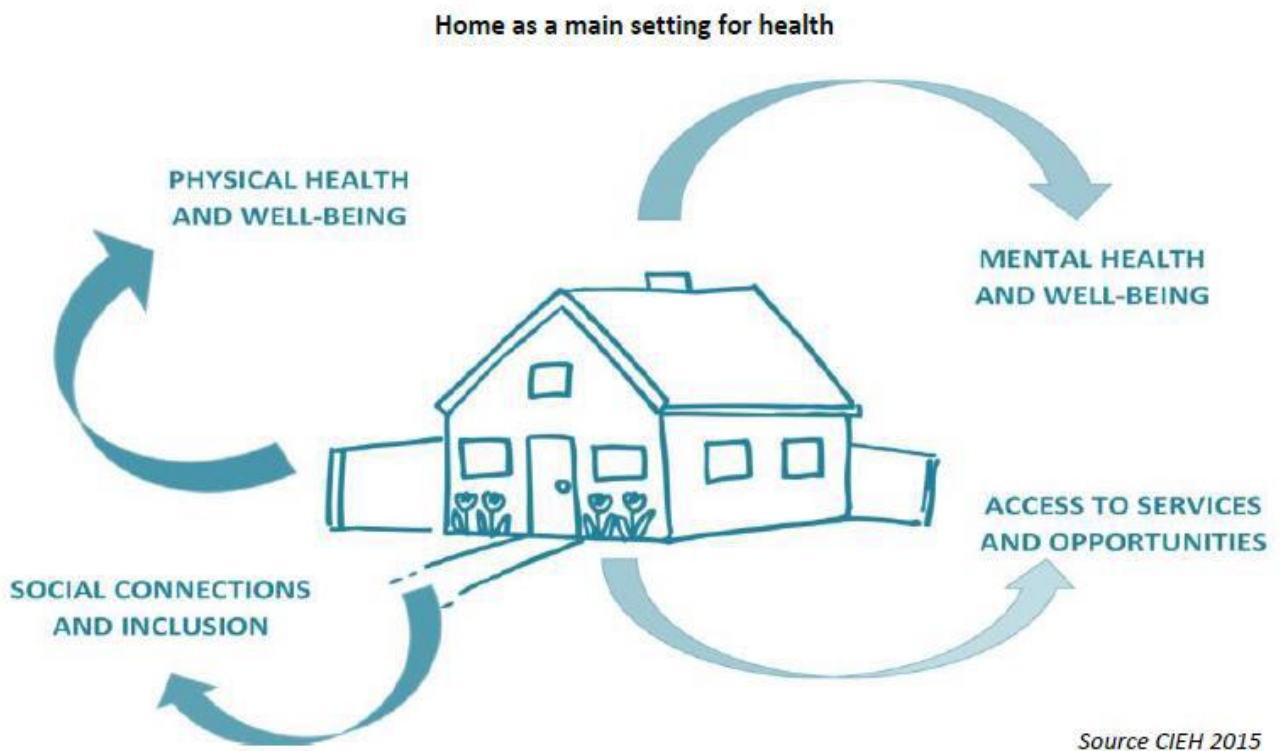
Homelessness has serious health implications for both individuals and populations. Homelessness is not just a housing problem; it can be caused by a multitude of social, individual and economic factors (Fitzpatrick, 2000)

Wiltshire Council
Where everybody matters

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Homelessness Review for Wiltshire
Evidence Base Summary & Initial Analysis

1.0 Purpose

This year we are carrying out a review of homelessness in Wiltshire, and producing a new Homelessness Strategy in 2019. The new strategy will set out how we plan to prevent homelessness, and working with partner organisations across Wiltshire deliver services that provide the right accommodation and support that those facing homelessness need.

When developing a new homeless strategy, Local Authorities should carry out a review of homelessness in its County. The Homelessness Review is a detailed evidence base that looks at information, statistics and central and regional government policy to identify the key homelessness issues, and gaps in our current provision. It will inform the early development stage of the Homelessness Strategy 2019-24.

2.0 Context

This paper draws on data from a range of local and national sources. Comparisons are made with neighbouring housing authorities as well as the South West region and England as a whole. Data relating to the four previous financial years is used for the purpose of identifying recent trends.

This review comes at a time when the extent of homelessness across England is increasingly challenging. The term 'homeless' includes those who are statutory homeless, people who are rough sleeping and sofa surfers. At any one time there are as many as 4,750 people rough sleeping on the streets of England, and more than 78,000 households and over 120,000 children in Temporary Accommodation. In addition, there are believed to be high numbers of 'hidden homeless' people who are housed by family and friends in difficult and changing circumstances but are not always captured as part of official figures.[1]

Homelessness has increased nationally and since 2010 the numbers of households in temporary accommodation has increased by more than 60%, since March 2011 the number of people who sleep rough has risen by 134%. Underpinning these upward trends are the various causes of homelessness of which, the most important remains the supply and affordability of decent housing in the South of England. Wiltshire has not been immune to these national developments. Wiltshire's recorded street count of people who are sleeping rough, has continually risen from 9 in 2014 to 42 in Sept 2018, however following the implementation of our Rough Sleeper Initiatives to reduce rough sleeping in Wiltshire we achieved a reduction in the number of rough sleepers from 42 to 22 during our rough sleeper estimate in November 2018. We have also seen an increase in prevention and relief and a gradual reduction in both temporary accommodation and homeless decisions which is against national trends.

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[1] The Guardian (2018) Rough sleeper numbers in England rise for seventh year running 11 May 2018

3.0 Definition of Homelessness

The term homelessness is often considered to apply to those people 'sleeping rough'. So, we have set out below what we mean by homeless and who we include in the definition.

Crisis defines Homelessness as follows:-

"Homelessness is about more than rooflessness. A home is not just a physical space, it also has a legal and social dimension. A home provides roots, identity, a sense of belonging and a place of emotional wellbeing. Homelessness is about the loss of all these. It is an isolating and destructive experience and homeless people are some of the most vulnerable and social excluded in our society."

Homelessness includes:

Statutory and threatened with Homeless: If an individual or household is accepted by a local authority as meeting the criteria set out in the Housing Act 1996 we would have a duty to provide suitable accommodation. Being threatened with homelessness applies to those who are at risk of losing their home within 56 days.

Hidden homelessness: These are individuals or households who do not have access to suitable housing, but who may be staying with friends or family and are often not known to services. This can also include those who have no recourse to public funds

Rough Sleeping: Rough sleeping is those who sleep or live on the streets and is the most visible form of homelessness. Many people who sleep rough will suffer from multiple health conditions, such as mental health problems and drug misuse and they are also in greater danger of violence than the general population

People become homeless for lots of different reasons. There are social causes of homelessness, such as lack of affordable housing, poverty, unemployment and life events that cause individuals to become homeless. For many life events like a relationship breaking down, losing a job, metal or physical health problems, or substance misuse can be the trigger. Being homeless can in turn make many of these problems even harder to resolve

In Wiltshire and nationally the main causes of homelessness are:

- Termination of Assured Shorthold tenancies
- Asked to leave by family and friends
- Relationship breakdown

However, these reasons are only the trigger for people to seek assistance, and not the underlying issues that have caused the crisis to build up in the first place. For many people, there is no single event that results in sudden homelessness, it is normally due to a number of other unresolved factors that have built up over time and individuals can arrive at the point of homelessness after a long chain of other life events.

Supply of affordable housing - House of Commons briefing paper (Wilson and Barton, 2016) identified the overall supply of affordable housing as a key 'structural' factor. There are now over one million fewer homes owned by local authorities and housing associations, then in 1977. Consequently, this limits local authorities' ability to house homeless families and those families in need.

Poverty - Common risk factors associated with homelessness are unemployment or working in very low-skilled and/or unstable employment; Joseph Rowntree Foundation review (2014) highlighted how the poverty people faced was further complicated by additional requirements for support e.g. mental and/or physical ill health, as well as various forms of marginalisation. Homeless people and those formerly homeless were identified as facing further barriers regarding accessing and retaining employment which included: lack of stable housing, work disincentives associated with the welfare benefits system, vulnerabilities and support needs, low educational attainment, limited or no work experience, low self-esteem and employer discrimination.

Psychological Understanding - Understanding the psychological relationship with homelessness remains significant. Mental health issues are further exacerbated and linked with economic, social and health depreciation. research further shows there are high levels of childhood abuse and neglect in homeless communities, which is linked to attachment problems and difficulties in dealing with emotions, which in turn are linked with substance misuse and the anti-social behaviours which lead to tenancy breakdown. strong correlation between the extent of neglect and trauma experienced in childhood and the severity of disadvantage then experienced in adulthood

Lifecycle transitions - Research supports an increased risk of homelessness and lifecycle transitions. Key transition points include; adolescence, leaving education, the parental home or a care institution, including prisons, hospital, mental health institutions and foster care; Many people deinstitutionalised, will not have a family home to return to, may have lost their home during their care/stay or unable to find suitable new housing. They are also vulnerable to social exclusion, which can further exacerbate the risk of homelessness

4.0 Current levels of homelessness

Homelessness has been on a steady upward trend in England since 2009/10. Homeless applications have increased by 30% in England since 2009/10 from 89,000 to 115,590 in 2016/17

In Wiltshire, statutory homeless decisions have dropped sharply (by 45%) since a spike in 2014/15 which was in part due to the MOD rebasing and discharge programme. Regionally, homeless acceptances have increased by 4% in comparison to 2014/15. 'Other' decisions on homeless applications (homeless but not in priority need or homeless intentionally) in Wiltshire increased by 2% between 2014/15 and 2017/18. By comparison, such decisions declined by 9% in England.

Table 1: Homelessness in Wiltshire

Year	Total Homeless Decisions	Those in Priority Need	Intentional	Non priority	Not homeless	Acceptance Rate
2014-15	542	437	40	16	0	81%
2015-16	386	285	33	23	0	74%
2016-17	354	269	48	12	0	76%
2017-18	356	249	53	16	0	70%
2018 -19 (Qtr 1 & 2)	71	51	7	12	1	71%

The Homeless Reduction Act came into force on 1st April 2018 and you will see from the first two quarters of 2018/2019 that it has had a signifcant impact on the amount of homeless cases that has required a formal S184 decision. Taking the first two quarters of 2017/2018 as an average we would have made 178 S184 homeless decisions compared to only 71 in 2018/2019. It is however far to early to draw upon any conclusions as the process has significantly changed and we need to see this change embedded before we can analyse the true impact of this Act.

Graph 1: Homelessness decisions and acceptances in Wiltshire
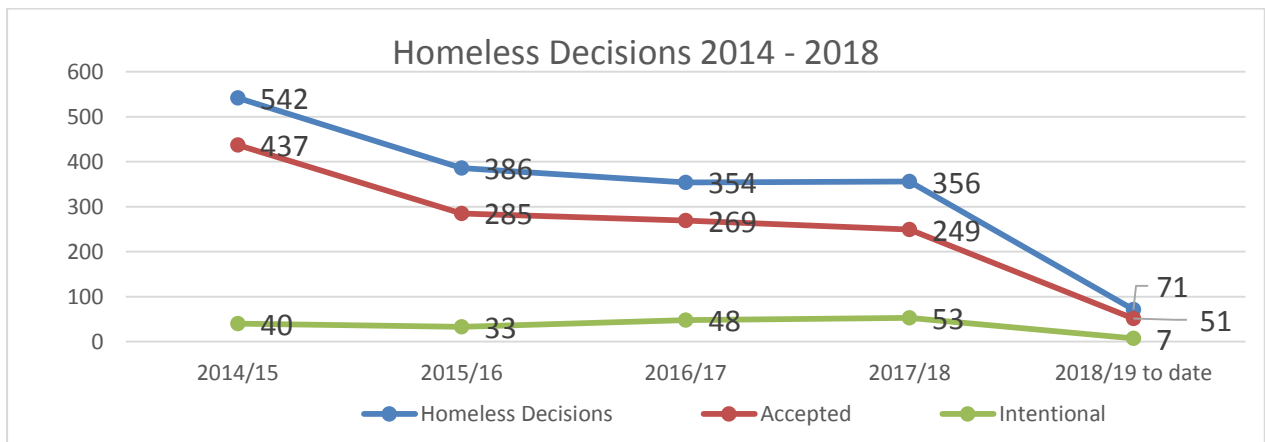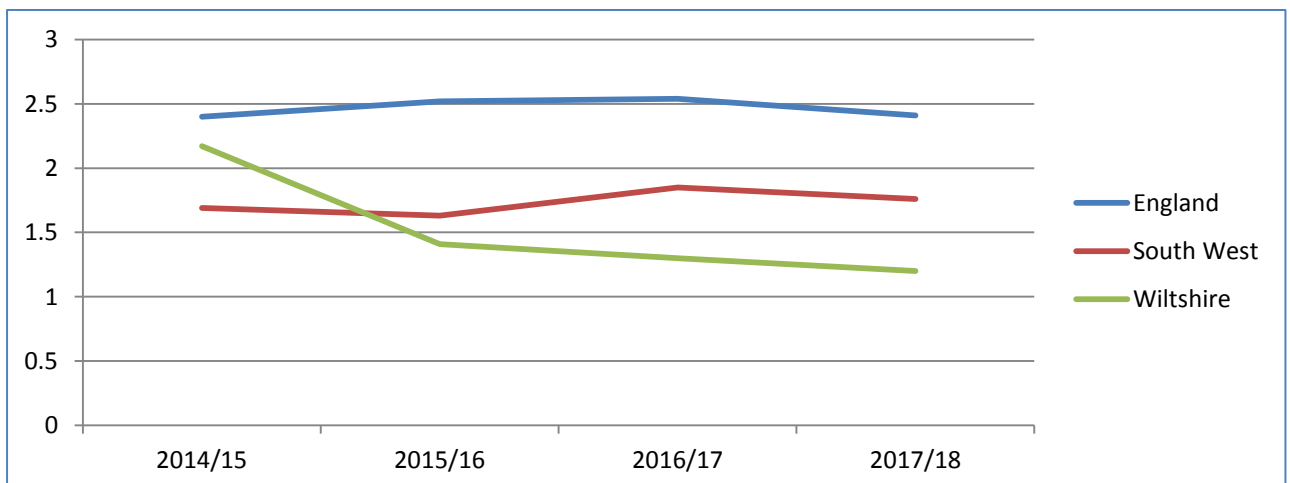

Graph 2: Homeless acceptances per 1,000 households

Table 2: Regional comparison: homeless acceptances 2014-15 to 2017-18

Local Authority	Homeless Acceptances Per 1,000 Households[2]		
	2014-15	2017-18	Change
BANES	0.64	1.09	+70%
Cotswold	0.78	0.68	-13%
South Glos	1.63	1.27	-22%
South Somerset	2.76	2.10	-24%
Swindon	1.77	1.20	-32%
Wiltshire	2.17	1.20	-45%
Mendip	1.20	0.35	-71%
South West	1.69	1.76	+4%
England	2.40	2.41	0%

So when we look to breakdown those who have been accepted as homeless, just over three quarters (77%) of households in Wiltshire in 2017/8 were classified as being in priority need due to having dependent children or on grounds of pregnancy. This was slightly higher than the national average of 72%. 16% were accepted due to physical or mental health difficulties and nationally this figure was 18%.

**Table 3: Priority need categories, Wiltshire**

Year	Dependent children	Pregnancy	Physical health or Disability	Mental health or disability	Violence	Age 16 / 17	Custody	Older Age
2014-15	375	27	28	7	0	0	0	0
2015-16	240	22	17	6	0	0	0	0
2016-17	211	18	21	13	0	0	0	6
2017-18	188	13	22	18	8	0	0	0
2018 -19 (Qtr 1 & 2)	42	4	3	0	0	1	1	0

Table 4: Household profile of applicants accepted as homeless in Wiltshire

	Couple with dependent children	Lone parent household with dependent children		One person household		All other household groups	Total
Year		Male Applicant	Female Applicant	Male Applicant	Female Applicant		
2014-15	166	5	180	35	0	16	437
2015-16	79	26	126	23	10	0	285
2016-17	73	13	136	27	11	9	269
2017-18	68	10	118	28	15	10	249
2018 -19 (Qtr 1 & 2)	16	0	27	6	2	0	51

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[2] Please note that some of the numbers involved in this section are relatively low. For example, Cotswold accepted a duty to only 26 households during 2017-18.

Graph 3: Age profile of applicants accepted as homeless, Wiltshire
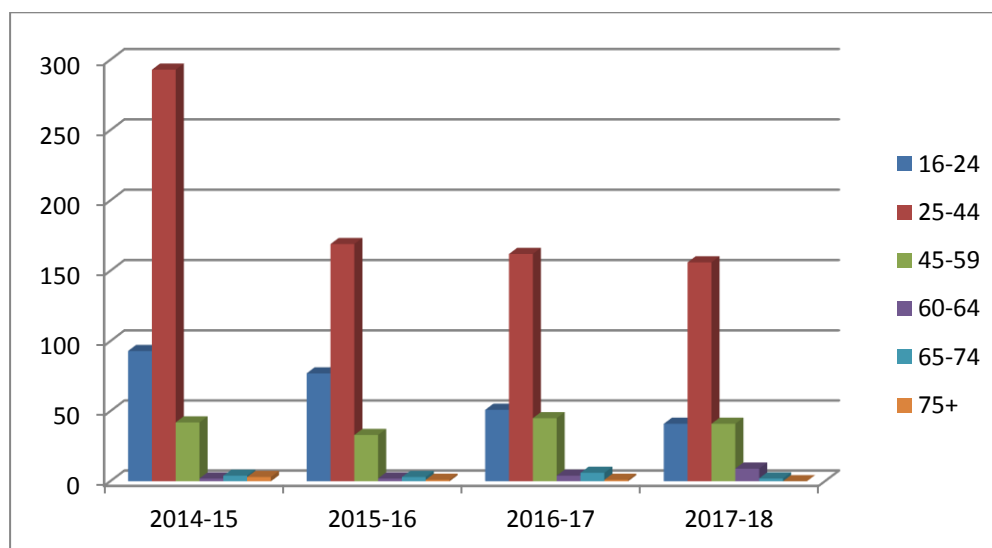
Given that the majority of homelessness applications are made by households including a pregnant female or with dependent children, the demographic profile of the county is likely to impact as although Wiltshire has an ageing population in 2016 the number of females aged 20-39 in Wiltshire was well below the national average.
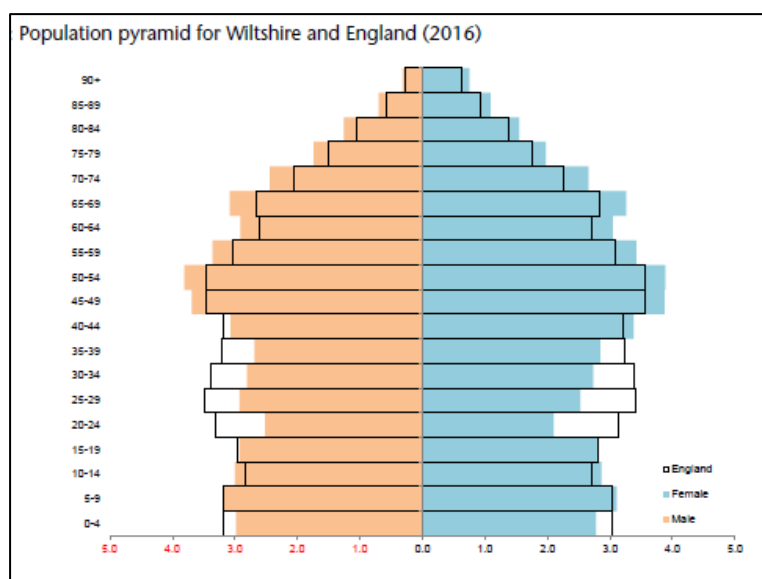

Table 5 below details the ethnic profile of applicants accepted and statutorily homeless in Wiltshire. Comparing these figures with recent population data (Wiltshire Council, 2017), homelessness rates are disproportionately higher amongst black and minority ethnic groups. Government statistics show that this is a matter of concern that extends beyond the county boundary.

Table 5: Ethnic profile of applicants accepted as homeless in Wiltshire

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19 (QTR 1+2)
White	384	255	241	216	45
Black or Black British	47	14	16	22	6
Asian or Asian British	5	9	--	--	--
Mixed[1]	-	5	--	--	--
Other ethnic origin	-	-	10	--	--
Ethnic Group not Stated	-	-	--	--	--
Totals	437	285	269	249	51

4.1 Reasons for statutory homelessness

Termination of an assured shorthold tenancy was the most common cause of homelessness in both Wiltshire (31% of total acceptances) and England (27%) in 2017/18. This cause of homelessness has grown significantly since 2009/10. In Wiltshire in the last quarter of 2017 and the first quarter of 2018 it was again the most common reason for loss of previous settled accommodation, although down on the previous year. At a national level, it appears to be in decline and in Q1 2018 it was overtaken by parents, friends or other relatives no longer willing or able to accommodate as the main driver of homelessness.

Table 6: Reasons for homelessness, Wiltshire

Primary reason	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19 Qtr 1&2
Parents no longer willing to accommodate	41	57	36	27	7
Other relatives / friends no longer willing to accommodate	32	18	30	34	2
Non-violent relationship breakdown	54	40	39	40	7
Violence	21	26	24	15	2
Harassment	0	0	0	0	1
Mortgage Arrears	0	0	6	0	0
Rent arrears	0	0	5	0	3
Termination of AST	210	119	92	87	24
Loss of rented accommodation other	10	18	17	11	1
Left institution	0	0	0	6	3
Left HM Forces	69	7	20	22	1
Other	0	0	**0**	7	0

4.2 Temporary Accommodation

The number of households in temporary accommodation in England continues to grow and stood at 3.4 per 1,000 households during 2017/18. 68% of these households are living in temporary accommodation in London. In Wiltshire, 0.45 per 1,000 households were in temporary accommodation in 2017/18, down from 0.53 in 2014/15.
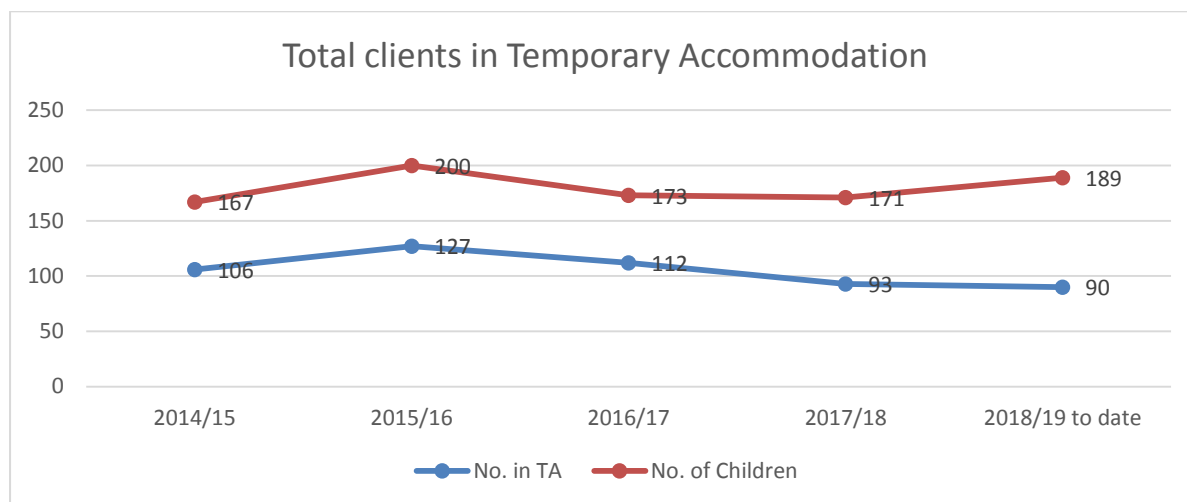
Graph 4: Households in temporary accommodation, Wiltshire

Table 7: Total clients and children in Temporary Accommodation

Year	Number of households	Number of children
2014-15	106	167
2015-16	127	200
2016-17	112	173
2017-18	93	171
2018 -19 20th Nov 2018	90	189

Table 8: Temporary Accommodation Provision in Wiltshire

Type	Hostel Bed / Room	One-bed	Two-bed	Three-bed	Four-bed	Total
Private Registered Provider		2	24	3		29
Private Sector Leasing		7	30	8	1	46
Local Authority	4 (including 1 x crash pad)	28				32
Totals	**4**	**37**	**54**	**11**	**1**	**107**

4.3 Supported Accommodation

The local authority funds services for homeless people with support needs falling into the following categories: high risk offenders, single homeless people, young parents and young people. Floating support is also provided to households living in temporary accommodation. Supported housing is generally provided in furnished hostels, shared

houses and self-contained accommodation. Each service employs trained staff to support clients to develop their independence and tenancy management skills and to move on to longer-term accommodation. Support levels vary according to client need. The support period is up to two years and in exceptional circumstances the provider can request an extension to this period where the client needs this.

Public Health also commission 28 refuge units (11 in Salisbury, 7 in Devizes, 5 in Chippenham and 5 in Corsham) and10 self-contained flats comprising *places of safety* (6 in Trowbridge, 4 in Chippenham).

The Places of Safety prioritise:

- Families with male children of 16 and over who would not be accommodated in the refuges
- Male victims of DA
- Where there is chaotic behaviour
- Where there is a high care need and a domiciliary care package
- Couples fleeing honour based violence
- Where ethnic / cultural reasons suggest this would be best e.g. specific cooking facilities needed
- Same sex couples fleeing abuse

The provision of supported housing units is made up as follows:

Graph 5: Supported Accommodation across Wiltshire
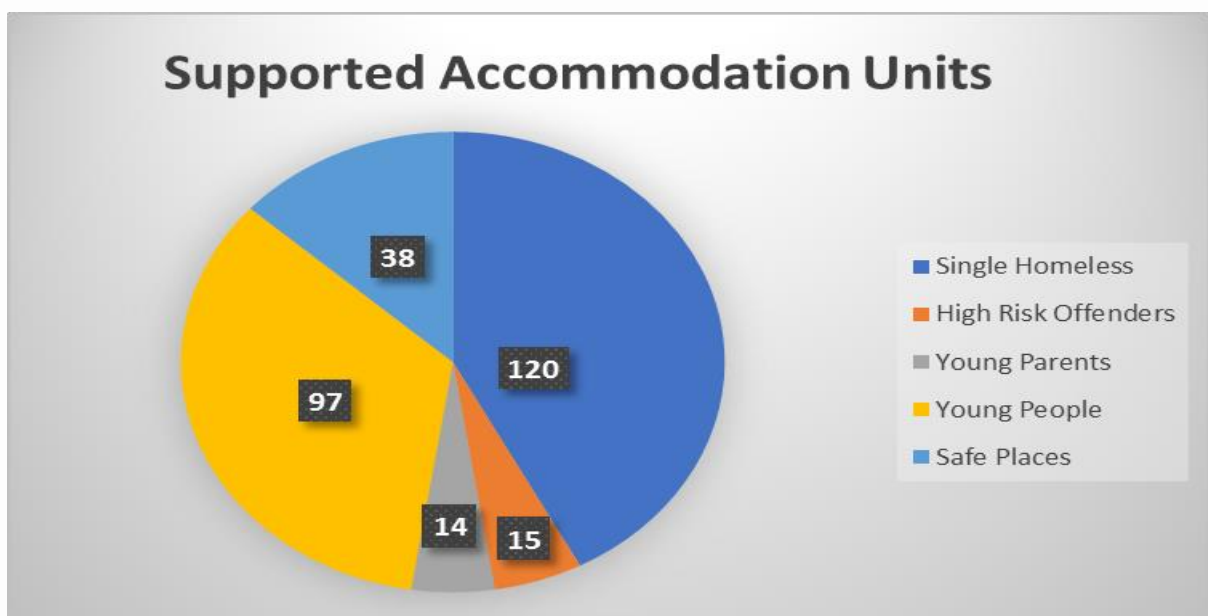
4.4 Accommodation for Persons with a Learning Disability

It is extremely rare for a person known to the local authority with a diagnosis of a learning disability to become homeless. This is because their care is overseen by a care manager (qualified social worker). Support providers notify the authority if there

is a risk of a placement breaking down and measures are taken to prevent homelessness. The local authority has statutory duties towards this client group under the Care Act 2014. It is possible that a person with a diagnosis of a learning disability who is not known to the local authority may become homeless. In this instance the housing department refers the person concerned to the Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities for assistance.

4.5 Accommodation for Persons with Severe Mental Health Problems

The supported housing schemes outlined above will often accommodate persons with mental health difficulties. Mental health problems can also co-exist alongside other difficulties such as a learning disability. Sometimes, and for a variety of reasons, mental health issues are undiagnosed.

Persons with severe mental health problems who become homeless may be able to access specific supported housing schemes.

5.0 Rough Sleeping

Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness and the most damaging. It can cause significant harm to individual physical and mental health and general well-being as well as reduced life expectancy. Rough sleeping and the street-based behaviour often associated with it, such as begging, street drinking and other forms of antisocial behaviour are also highly damaging to communities.

We believe that nobody should be sleeping on the streets and with appropriate support and suitable placements to ensure there is a route off the streets for everyone.

Our Aim for Rough sleeping is:

"Working together to help reduce the number of people who are rough sleeping"

Contrary to the national trend, Wiltshire recorded a drop in rough sleeping between 2015/16 and 2016/17. However, our Rough Sleeper count in 2017 and Sept 2018 recorded a marked increase in Wiltshire, and following the implementation of our Rough Sleeper initiatives we recorded a drop in Rough Sleepers across Wiltshire at only 22 in November 2018.

Table 9: Rough Sleeping in England

Autumn of:	Wiltshire	South West	England
2014	9	362	2,744
2015	23	509	3,569
2016	18	536	4,134
2017	31	580	4,751
2018 (Sept)	42	Not yet known	Not yet known
2018 (Nov)	22	Not yet known	Not yet known

In Wiltshire both in 2017 and 2018, the majority of rough sleepers were male UK nationals over the age of 25 years, which is consistent with the national picture, however we have seen a gradual increase in the number of women rough sleeping, and a high percentage of women rough sleepers have been in a relationship with another rough sleeper.

Table 10: Profile of Nov 2018 rough Sleeper Count (Nov 18)

	Under 18	18-25	Over 25	Age unkown	Total	Uk national	EU citizen	Non EU national	Total
Women	0		6	1	7	6	1	0	7
Men	0	1	12	2	15	15	0	0	15
Total	0	1	18	3	22	21	1	0	22

Our more recent estimate of rough sleepers took place in November 2018 and we recorded a total of 22 Rough sleepers. We have seen an increase in the last couple of years of rough slepeers with a range of overlapping and multiple disadvantages, such as addiction, poor physical and mental health and offending histories.

Table 11: Location of Rough Sleepers across Wiltshire and identified needs (Nov 18)

	Alcohol	Drugs	Mental Health	Physical disabilities	No support needs identified
Trowbridge/Bradford on Avon	2	2	2	0	1
Westbury/Warminster	1	1	2	0	0
Devizes	1	1	1	0	1
Melksham	1	1	1	0	0
Salisbury	3	3	6	3	4
Chippenham	2	1	1	0	0
Total	10	9	13	3	6

Even though this evidence suggests the Council is already making good progress to tackle rough sleeping, the homeless strategy sets out the actions to make further steps towards our aim and priority to reduce rough sleeping in Wiltshire

Rough sleeping is an area of priority for Wiltshire Council, in terms of preventing peope sleeping rough, ensuring there are swift and effective routes off the streets for everyone and providing appropriate support to improve health and well being. In 2018 we bid for the Rough sleepers Initiative funding to deliver improvements to our provision for rough slepers over the period 2018 / 2020. We successfully obtained £312,245 for 18/19 and £305,491 for 19/20 and in November 2018 we saw a significant reduction in rough sleeping figures for Wiltshire

Wiltshires rough sleeping programme, supported by this funding includes the following inititives:-

- Recruitment of a Rough Sleeper Team Leader with a team of 5 rough sleeper outreach workers, one of which has a mental health specialisim and a rough sleeper prevention officer

- An 8 bed winter provision in trowbridge which includes overnight support

- 6 Intensive High level support bed spaces for entrenched rough rleepers with complex needs

- 10 bed spaces at Alabara Place Salibsury for a sit up service and Severe Weather provision as well as 10 winter provision spaces at Unity House in chippenham and 8 Severe Weather provision paces

- Funding to secure 15 private lets for rough sleepers and £10k to use for personal budget requests to help unlock barriers in securing accommodation

The other provisions provided to Rough Sleepers across Wiltshire are as follows:-

Project Name/Location	Opening Times	Services provided
Doorway, Chippenham	Monday morning breakfast & Thursday afternoon hot lunch	Showers, laundry and benefit support.
Opendoors, Devizes	Monday 11:00 - 13:00 Lunch, Wednesday 09:30 - 11:30 Breakfast, Thursday 14:00 - 16:00, Friday 17:00-18:30 Evening meal.	Access to showers, food and benefit support.
The Hub, Bradford on Avon	Monday - Friday 10:00 - 13:00	Benefits support, Internet access, Food bank and the Hub plan to provide hot food from the 1st November this will be for the winter months.
Breakthrough, Trowbridge	Monday & Tuesday 10:00am - 13:00	Providing Hot food, support with benefits.
Cornerstone, Warminster	Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:00- 12:30	Access to the internet, support with benefits and a food bank.
Cross Point, Westbury	Monday, Wednesday 14:30 - 17:00 & Thursday, Friday 10:00- 12:30	Support with benefits. No food provided. Access to Warminster foodbank.

Alabare, Salisbury Street Project	Sunday, Monday, Tuesday Wednesday & Friday 11-15:00	Support with benefits, hot meals, clothing store, sleeping bags, laundry and washing facilities
Morning Star Banquet Run (Soup Run)	Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays 3.30 - 4.00pm.	Hot food and drinks
SP2 Community Coffee shop, Salisbury	Monday - Friday 10:30 - 4:30	Reasonably priced drinks and snacks. Free drinks if RS.
Lifeline, Melksham	Monday and Thursday	Hot showers, Tea/Coffee, Debt/Housing advice.
Trowbridge Soup Kitchen, St Stephens Car Park, ground floor.	Every evening from 19:00	Hot food/drinks.
Unity House Drop in	Tuesday, Friday Sunday 14:00-16:00	Showers, Laundry, Link up with other services.

6.0 Prevention & Relief

Homelessness prevention and relief cases have increased in Wiltshire (by 14%) since 2014/15. This contrasts with the national picture where such cases have declined by 6%, this could be because we focused on prevention in advance of the Homeless Act coming into force. Nevertheless, homelessness prevention and relief cases in Wiltshire remain well below the national average (5.62 compared to 9.16 cases per 1,000 households).

Graph 6: Prevention and relief cases per 1,000 households
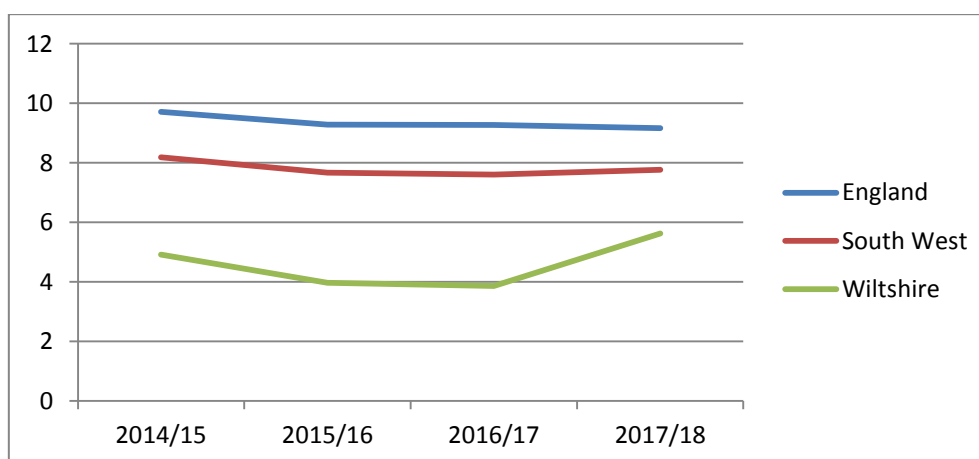
The most common forms of prevention in Wiltshire during 2017/18 were conciliation interventions and assistance to remain in the social or private rented sector. Below shows the total amount of social lettings we made each year and identifies of those lettings how many were allocated to homeless applicants as well as those of which we had a statutory duty to accommodate. An average of 17% of social lettings across Wiltshire are allocated to clients who we have a statutory duty to accommodate, with an average of 53% of all allocations being made to clients who are homeless.

Table 12: A breakdown of total lettings and those made to homeless applicants

Year	Total Lettings	Lettings to homeless applicants	of which statutory homeless	Total on Register at year end
2014/15	1,806	1,135 (62%)	390 21%	1,184
2015/16	1,583	925 (58%)	256 16%	1,649
2016/17	1,496	752 50%	237 16%	1,413
2017/18	1,479	628 42%	230 15%	1,737

This contrasts with the national picture where the most common type of assistance was resolving housing benefit problems. As was the case in England, most people were helped into alternative accommodation in Wiltshire either through allocations or nomination into social housing or through supported housing.

Table 13: Homelessness prevention and relief in Wiltshire

Prevention / Relief Measure	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018/19 (Qtr 1&2)
Mediation	9	16	12	18	2
Conciliation	20	14	23	36	17
Financial payments	3	1			
Debt advice	14	3		22	1
Resolving housing benefit problems	23	8	10	10	1
Resolving rent or service charge arrears	30	13	22	19	12
Sanctuary scheme measures for domestic violence	2	2	0	0	2
Crisis intervention – emergency support	8	5	5	8	1
Negotiation or legal advocacy in PRS	32	13	15	21	6
Assistance to remain in PRS or social housing	10	14	12	30	18
Mortgage arrears interventions	7	1			
Household placed in hostel or HMO	25	14	15	8	4

PRS with landlord incentive	99	38	45	46	20
PRS without landlord incentive	121	75	51	115	80
Accommodated by friends or relatives	51	50	32	72	10
Supported accommodation placement	168	160	163	207	91
Local authority tenant management move	3	52	11	27	
Part 6 offer of local authority accommodation or nomination to RSL	339	307	356	499	339
Negotiation with RSL outside of Part 6 nomination arrangement	17	20	15	25	9
Low cost home ownership	3				2
Other new accommodation	3	1			
Total Prevention & Relief	**987**	**717**	**796**	**1171**	**615**

Since April 2018 we are now required to record things very differently, however it is clear from what is being recorded is that homeless decisions have decreased and prevention and reliefs have increased. For Qtrs 1 & 2 we have recorded a total of 615 prevention / relief cases, with a further 202 cases in triage, 407 cases currently open under prevention and relief and 80 cases closed due to no contact or withdraw from process which is an increase from 2017/18.

The table below offers a comparison with neighbouring authorities as well as the regional and national averages.

Table 14: Regional comparison: prevention & relief cases

Local Authority	Prevention & Relief Per 1,000 Households		
	2014-15	2017-18	Change
Mendip	4.04	6.64	+64%
South Glos	3.15	4.54	+44%
BANES	6.74	9.49	+41%
Wiltshire	4.91	5.62	+14%
South Somerset	2.40	2.74	+14%
Swindon	3.90	2.78	-28%
Cotswold	2.18	0.66	-70%
South West	8.19	7.77	-5%
England	9.71	9.16	-6%

The availability and affordability of accessible housing

The size of the social housing sector in Wiltshire in 2017 (14.2%) was larger than many others in the south west (e.g. Cotswold (13.4%), Mendip (12.4%), South Gloucestershire (10.5%), North Dorset (13%) but smaller than the national average of 17.2%, with a larger than average owner-occupied sector. The table below provide a breakdown of total households on the housing register broken down by bands as well as total lettings made to each band across the last four years

Table 15 Demand and Total Lettings for affordable housing in Wiltshire

	Band 1		Band 2		Band 3		Band 4		Open Market Register	
	Total on Register	Lettings	Total on Register	Lettings	Total on Register	Lettings	Total on Register	Lettings	Total on Register	Lettings
2014/15	129	482	7	481	564	679	484	194	141	122
2015/16	140	326	11	5	814	827	634	425	323	84
2016/17	135	328	7	4	747	797	640	367	571	76
2017/18	85	318	72	9	801	763	779	380	672	74

In regard to affordability, house prices in Wiltshire are high. The average house price in Wiltshire in June 2017 was £277,813. This compares to £217,128 in Swindon, £253,374 in Mendip and £335,481 in BANES (Land Registry, 2018). Private sector rents are amongst the highest in the region (Valuation Office Agency, 2018)

7.0 Local Affordability Issues

Although Wiltshire ranks as a comparatively affluent area, government data indicates that there are some affordability issues relating to geographic areas of deprivation, child poverty, fuel poverty, below average wages and the number of people claiming out of work benefits. There are also links between poverty and specified household characteristics, and some households have been particularly impacted by welfare reform.
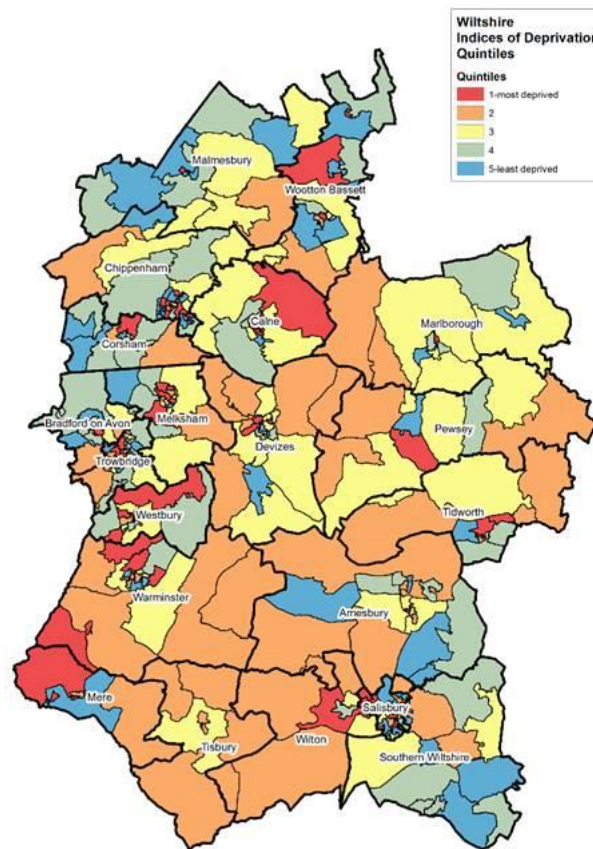
7.1 Areas of Deprivation

Poverty has a negative effect on health across all ages. Compared to England, Wiltshire has few areas of high deprivation. The English Indices of Deprivation 2015/16 Wiltshire report identified 39 (14%) of Wiltshire's 285 lower super output areas (smaller areas) were classified as in the most deprived 40% nationally. Of these one area (Trowbridge John of Gaunt-Studley Green) was in the 10% most deprived decile, 11 were in the second decile and 10 in the third decile.

Whilst Wiltshire can be considered least deprived than many other local authorities in England, 4% of Wiltshire's population live in the most deprived and second most deprived deciles in England. Graph 7 provides a map of all the locations within Wiltshire shaded to show the national deprivation decile into which they fall. Most of

the deprived areas are in Trowbridge and Salisbury with Chippenham and Melksham also having a number of areas with high deprivation.

**Graph 7 Map of Deprivation in Wiltshire with Community Areas (IMD 2015)**

Source Ordanance Survey

To further demonstrate the impact of deprivation on our local populations, Graph 8 illustrates those living in the most deprived areas have nearly double the rate of preventable mortality compared to those in the least deprived quintile.

Graph 8 Preventable Mortality – Inequality Analysis
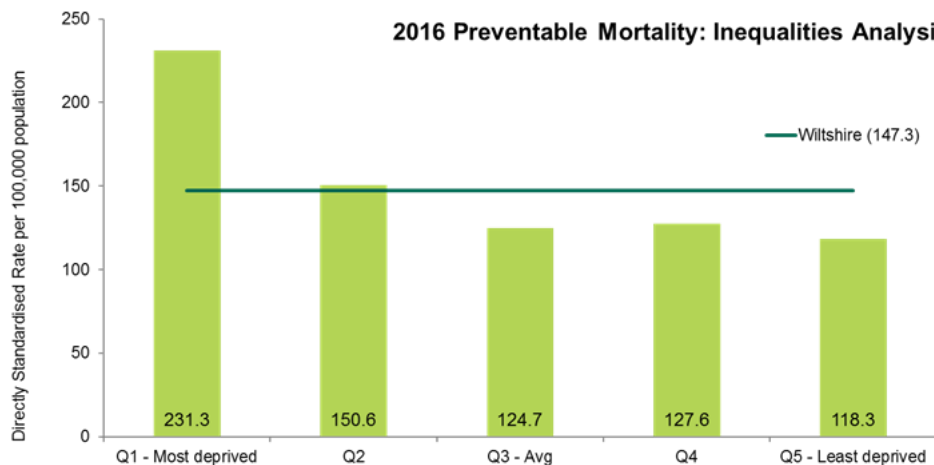
Source Wiltshire Intelligence

7.2 Child Poverty

The latest (2017) figures on child poverty indicate that, after housing costs, 17.81% of children in Wiltshire are living in poverty. This compares with 18.07% in BANES, 21.4% in Swindon, 23.2% in Mendip and 27.89% in Bristol (End Child Poverty, 2017).

7.3 Wages and Employment

Government figures on median gross weekly earnings in 2017 show that workers in Wiltshire earn on average less than those in the nearby mainly urban areas of Swindon and South Gloucestershire (although some people living in Wiltshire may well work in these urban areas) but the same or more than those in other areas in the south west (ONS, 2017).

The ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings Regional Time Series, January 2018 shows local gross earnings per annum for 2017 as:

Table 16: ONS Annual Survey of Earnings Jan 2018

| England Average	SW Average	Cotswold	South Somerset	South Glouc. UA	Swindon UA	Test Valley	West Berks UA	Wiltshire UA
£36,107	£31,651	£33,409	£30,238	£36,937	£36,718	£32,690	£39,849	£31,595

7.4 Private sector rents in the South West

Private Rental Market Statistics, 'Two Bedrooms' monthly rents recorded between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018 for the South West
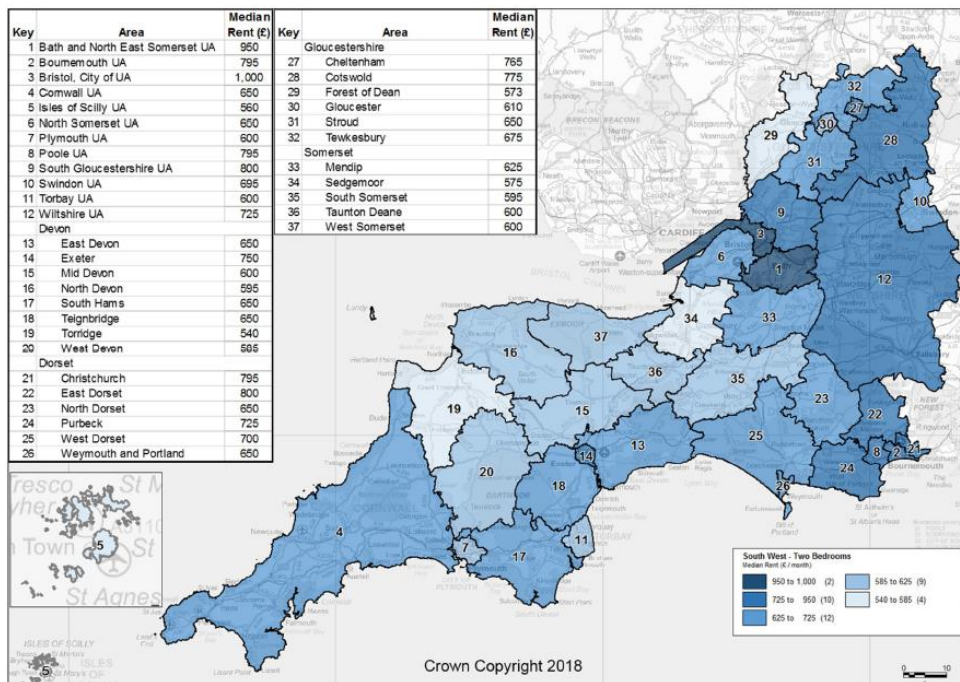
It is becoming increasingly difficult for benefit dependent households to find affordable accommodation in the private rented sector due to the restrictions placed on certain

welfare benefits including local housing allowance (1; 2; National Audit Office, 2017 & Shelter, 2017), the stigmatisation of welfare claimants, the well-publicised difficulties with universal credit and also for reasons relating to landlords' insurance. The graph below shows the difference between median market rents in the county and local housing allowance rates.

7.5 Gap between median market rents and LHA rates
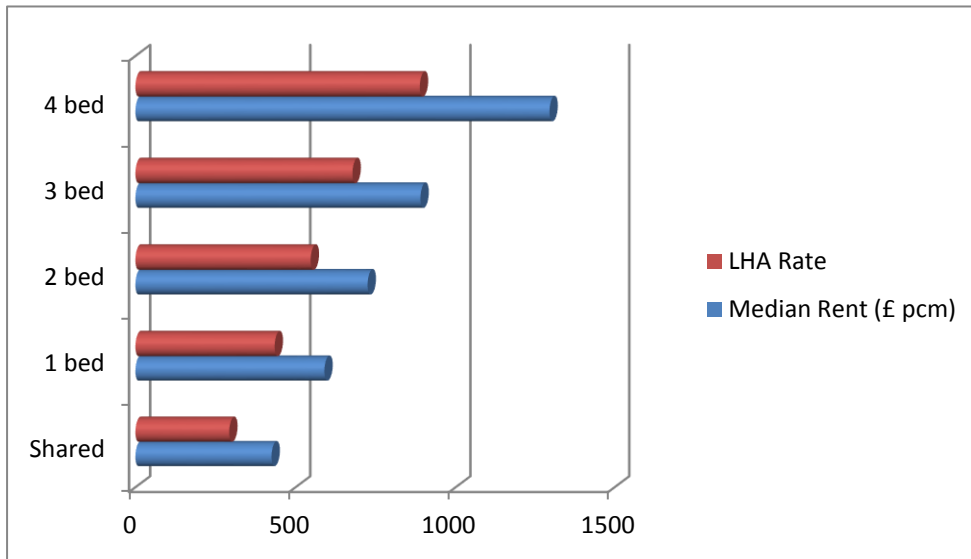
8.0 Universal Credit and rent arrears

The largest and most ambitious welfare reform over the past few decades has been the gradual implementation of Universal Credit. Universal Credit is a single payment for people of working age that replaced six existing benefits – housing benefit, child tax credit, income support, working tax credit, income based job seekers allowance and ESA. It is paid monthly in arrears to people aged 16 and over who are in employment or who are out of work and looking for a job.

Universal Credit has had some potential impacts on homelessness such as:

- Claimants must wait six weeks or longer before they receive their first monthly payment
- Due to the new process, the Department of Work and Pensions figures identify that some clients don't receive the money they are owed on time
- Social landlords have noticed a significant increase in rent arrears
- The transition from fortnightly to monthly payments is impacting on families who struggle to manage monthly budgets

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