

Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2020-24

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Key contextual information – Basingstoke and Deane

Housing Characteristics of the borough

Dwellings and households - In 2017, it was estimated that there were 73,920 dwellings in the borough. The council's Local Plan (2011-2029) sets a requirement to deliver 850 net new dwellings per annum to meet the borough's housing needs.

The profile is as follows:

Tenure	Number (%)
Owner Occupied	68%
Private Rented	13%
Social Renters	18%
Other	1%
Total	100%

In Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's 2019 resident's survey, 93% of residents were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the home they live in. Sub-analysis shows that there is variation amongst tenancy type – for example 98% of home-owners were satisfied with their home, with 73% satisfaction amongst housing association tenants.

Housing affordability prices and rents - The average house price in Basingstoke and Deane was £311,000 from April 2017 to March 2018. This average has increased by £24,000 (8.4%) from the previous monitoring year and the rate of increase is greater than other local authorities in the South East. The South East overall figure was an increase of £14,000 (4.6%)

Within Basingstoke and Deane, the lower quartile house price to lower quartile work based earnings ratio was 11.20 in 2017, the fifth highest figure in Hampshire (behind Hart, Winchester, East Hampshire and New Forest). The median house price to earnings ratio was 9.48, the fourth lowest figure in Hampshire (behind Gosport, Havant and Rushmoor).

The median monthly private rental value for a two-bedroom property in the borough was £875, with a lower quartile of £750 and upper quartile of £995.7. The upper quartile private rental

values were below the average for the South East (£1,150), but the same as the median (£875) and higher than the lower quartile value (£700).

Housing Register - The Housing Register as of 31 March 2019 had 4,251 households registered and comprises the following:

Totals on register	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Total	Total %
Single persons	84	2208	54	2,346	55%
Couples	29	464	4	497	12%
Family w/younger children	18	1084	7	1,109	26%
Family with older children	4	124	0	128	3%
Family with non-dependent children	7	162	2	171	4%

Rough sleeping - The rough sleeping count in recent years is as follows:

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
8	20	26	15	8	5

Spatial characteristics of the borough

Borough - Basingstoke and Deane borough covers an area of over 63,000 hectares (245 square miles), and comprises the town of Basingstoke and extensive areas of predominantly rural land. Basingstoke is by far the largest settlement in the borough with a population of approximately 115,000. The second largest settlement in the borough is Tadley on the northern borough boundary, with a population of approximately 13,700. There are also a number of small towns and larger villages including Whitchurch, Oakley, Overton, Bramley and Kingsclere.

Almost 75% (47,500 hectares) of the borough is covered by agricultural land or other land in non-wooded greenfield use and a further 15% of the borough is covered by woodland or forest. Much of the western part of the borough falls within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Population - The latest official estimate of the borough's total population stands at approximately 175,340. Compared to the South East of England and the national average, the borough has a relatively young population, with a higher proportion of young residents, and a lower proportion of pensioners. The borough's population profile has aged in recent years and this trend will continue into the future. In 2016, 16.7% of the population was aged 65 or over. By 2041, this is projected to increase to 24.9%.

Education and Skills - The borough has 16 infant schools, 15 junior schools, 27 primary schools and 10 secondary schools, as well as two further education colleges. The borough has a well qualified workforce and the 2011 census showed that 30.5% of the population aged 16 and over (40, 793) were educated to degree level or equivalent. This compares to 29.9% in the South East and 27.4% in England. There were also fewer people in the borough with no formal qualifications (17.3%), compared to the South East (19.1%) and England (22.5%). Basingstoke and Deane has a highly skilled workforce and in 2016/17, 1,290 apprenticeships were started.

Economy 89.9% of the borough’s working age population (aged 16-64) is economically active. This remains consistently higher than the South East average (81.3%) and England average (78.6%).

Unemployment in the borough is low at around 2.5%. This is similar to the average rate for the South East (3.4%) and England (4.3%).

Health - At the time of the 2011 Census, 50.7% of the population described their health as ‘very good’, which is slightly above the Hampshire average (49.1%).

Source: BDBC housing records and BDBC Annual Monitoring Report 2017/18

Further characteristics of the borough is available here:

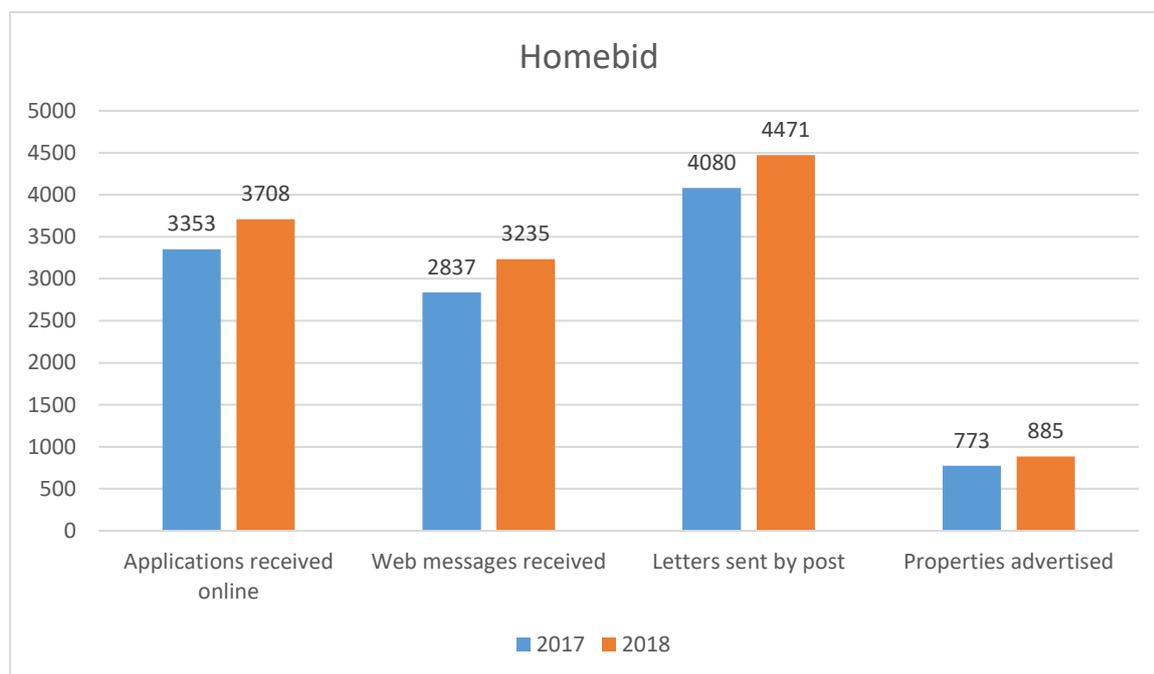
<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/Basingstoke-and-Deane-key-facts>

Evidence Base

1. Part VI – Housing Register

Housing Allocations Scrutiny Report:

<https://democracy.basingstoke.gov.uk/documents/s18362/Appendix%201%20Annual%20Review%202018%2019.pdf>

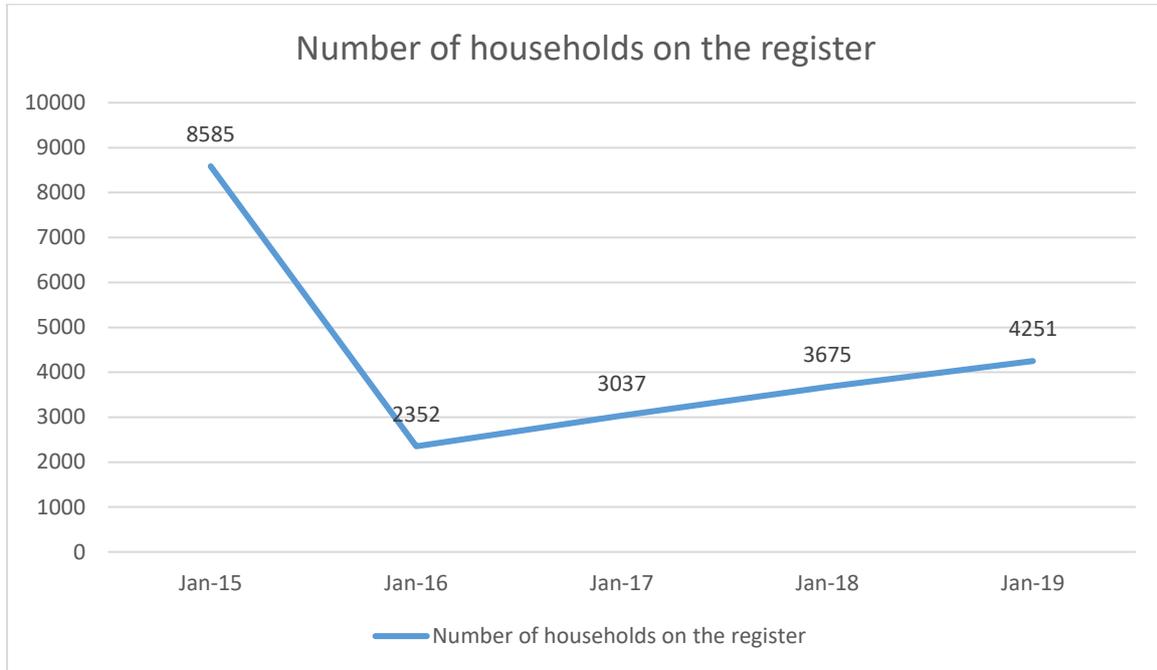


1.1 All aspects of online social housing applications and allocations are on the increase. The number of households applying for social housing has seen over a 10% increase from 3353 in 2017 to 3708 in 2018. The number of queries received via the online ‘web message’ function has seen a 14% increase from 2837 in 2018 to 3235 in 2018.

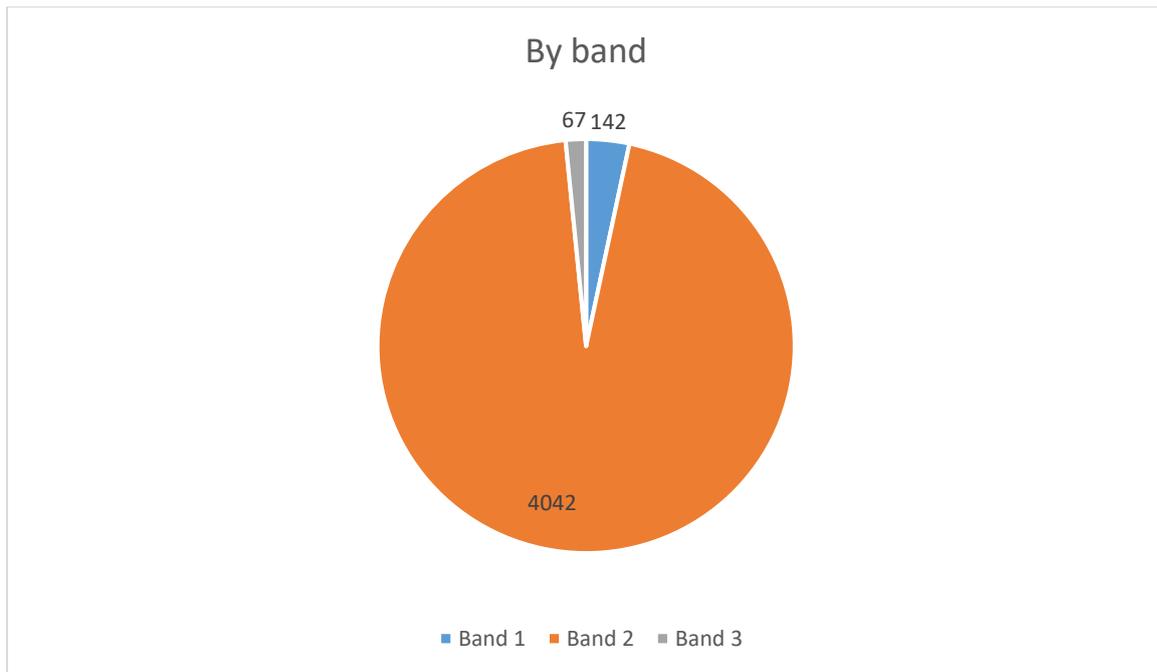
1.2 The number of properties advertised has also risen, from 773 in 2017 to 885 in 2018. More housing developments in Basingstoke and Deane brings more affordable housing, which is causing a steady rise in the number of social and affordable rented units advertised

through the Homebid website.

1.3 Whilst the two largest housing associations in the borough, Sovereign Housing Association and Vivid Housing Association, provided over 75% of the aforementioned properties advertised last year, the housing team works with over 20 housing associations in total. 16 of these housing associations provided properties to be advertised through the Homebid system last year.

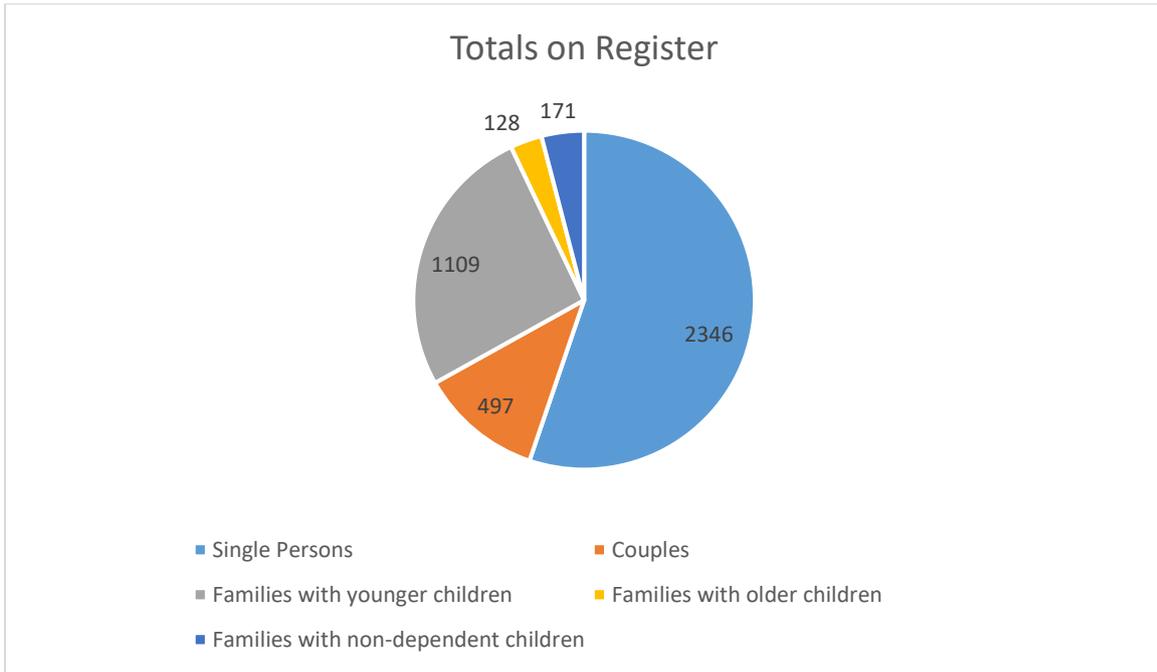


1.4 Prior to the changes to the council's Allocations Policy in October 2015, there were almost 9000 households on the housing register. This left many applicants without a reasonable chance of being successful for accommodation, and the number of applicants on the list dropped to roughly 2000 immediately following the implementation of the new Allocations Policy. This has steadily risen since – and there were 4251 households on the register as of January 2019.

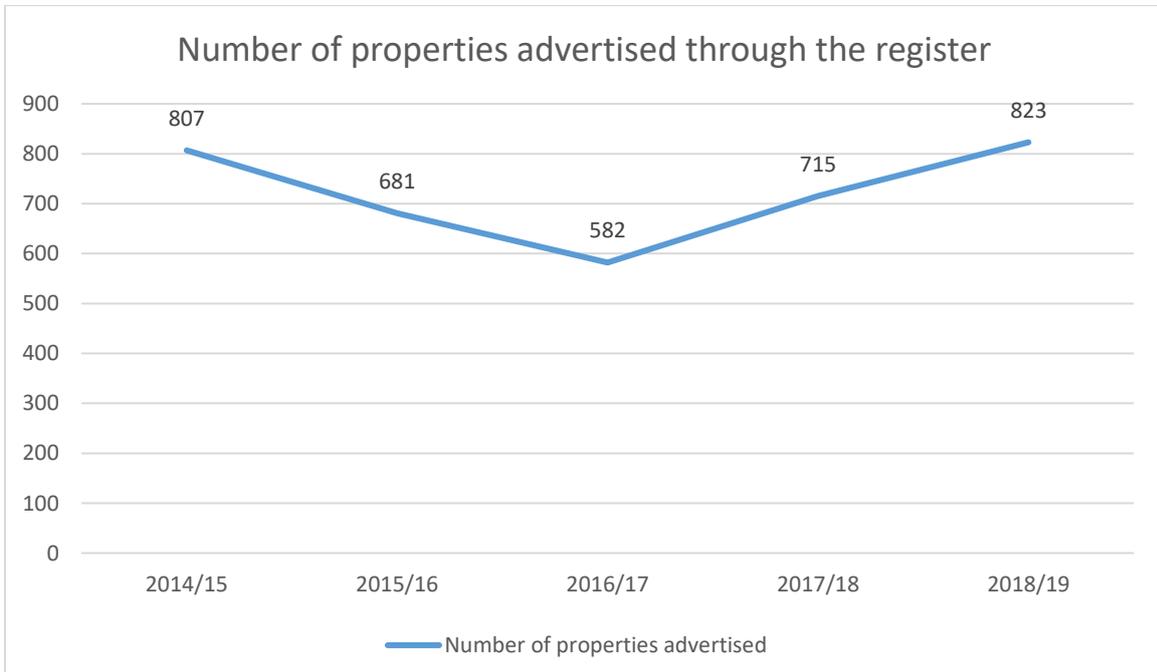


1.5 Creating a fairer, simpler allocations policy where only those applicants with a local connection and housing need qualify for inclusion, priority is awarded by date of application. Only 3% of households are in band 1 with a critical housing need, or under-occupation of social housing by 2 or more bedrooms. Just 2% of households are in band 3, with the main reason for this being applicants residing in supported accommodation, who will move into band 2 when they are ready to move on. The remaining 95% of applicants are placed in band 2.

1.6 Over half of people on the housing register qualify for inclusion because they are sharing facilities with another household. This could be applicants living with family, or renting a room in a shared house. This is the overwhelming reasonable preference category on the housing register.

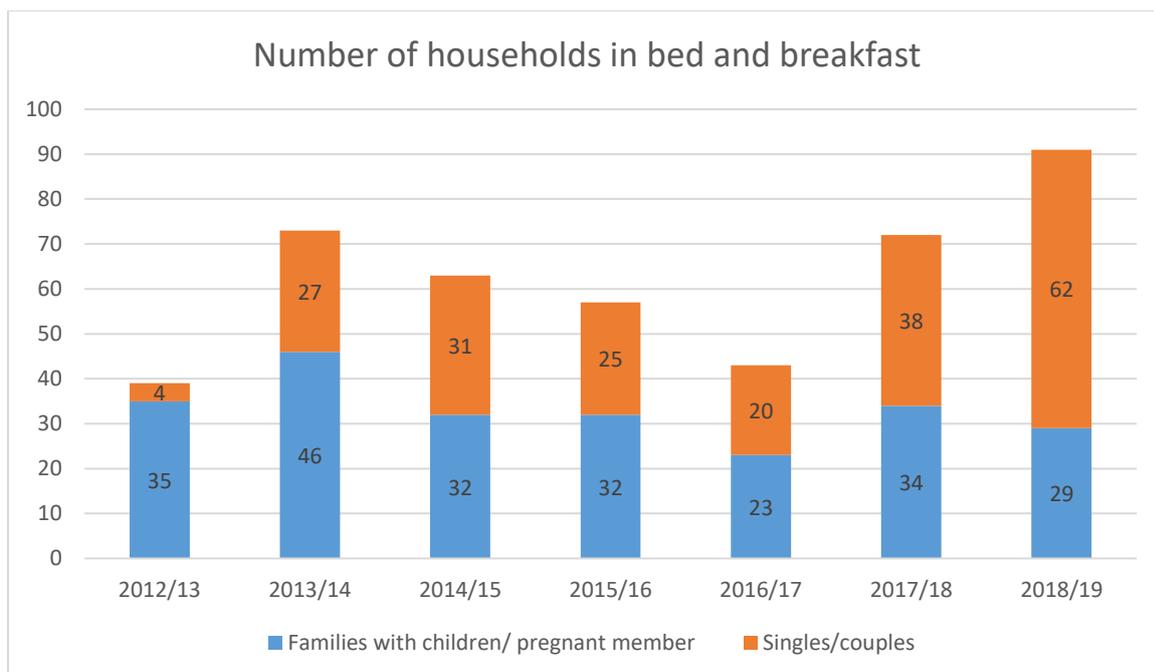


1.7 Over half of the households on the housing register are single applicants. This in turn means that there is a longer wait for one bedroom accommodation compared to 2/3 bedroom accommodation. Applicants are waiting roughly 18-24 months to be rehoused into 2 or 3 bedroom accommodation, this increases to roughly 48 months to be rehoused into a 1 bedroom property. There are also similar waiting times (circa 48 months) for larger 4 and 5 bedroom properties through the register.



1.8 There was a dip in housing developments in 2017, causing fewer properties advertised, however this is on the increase and in 2018/19 there were 823 properties advertised, the highest number since 2010/11.

2. Part VII – Homelessness



2.1 Due to the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018 and the Duty to Refer, coupled with a loss of 83 supported housing bedspaces since 2015/16 as a result of Hampshire County Council’s Supporting People revenue cuts, the housing team is seeing more approaches from complex cases which leads to more applicants being placed into bed and breakfast to comply with the legislation. In the last two years, for the first time, the total number of single people and couples without dependents outnumbered families or pregnant households being placed in bed and breakfast – highlighting the increase of more complex cases approaching the council for assistance. Despite the change in legislation and no increase in resource or accommodation, 2018/19 notably had the second lowest number of families with children or pregnant households in bed and breakfast in the last 7 years.

2.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act places a duty on Local Authorities to accommodate those households who are homeless and have reason to believe they have a priority need for 56 days under the relief duty. However, it is still unlawful for a Local Authority to place pregnant households or households with dependent children in bed and breakfast for over 42 days. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council have not had any pregnant households or households with dependent children in bed and breakfast for over this 6 week period. This shows that early solutions are being found for households and good preventative work has occurred to comply with the law. Only one couple without dependents have been in bed and breakfast for over 6 weeks, again highlighting the positive solutions being found quickly by the housing team.

2.3 The below table shows the financial implications of placing a household (either a single person, couple or family) into bed and breakfast. Basingstoke and Deane has to use chain hotels or providers out of area, most commonly in Slough.

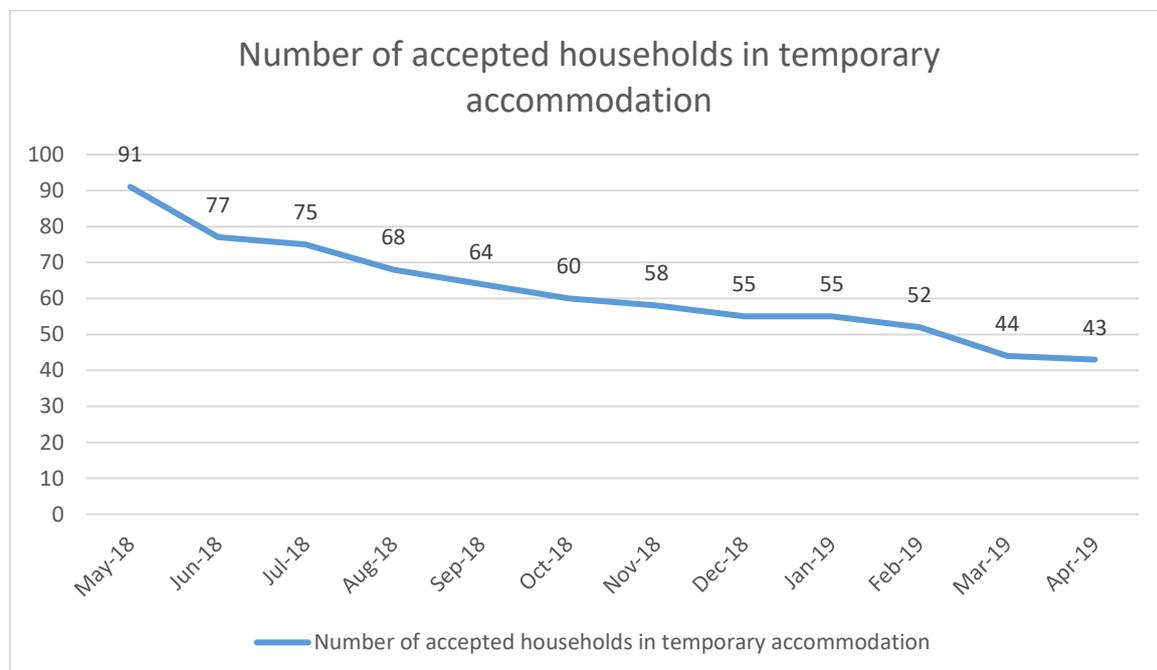
	Local chain hotel – 12 weeks – Total	Placement in Slough – 12 weeks	Travel costs – train (based at £16.20 a return BSK-SLO)	Travel costs-taxi	Total costs for out of area placements
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Single	£6807.72	£2820	£97.20 including travel for 6 appointments	£840 including travel for 6 appointments	£2917.20 - £3660
Couple	£6807.72	£2820	£194.40 including travel for 6 appointments	£840 including travel for 6 appointments	£3014.40 - £3660
Family of 4*	£6807.72	£3240	£336.60 including travel for 6 appointments	£1200 including travel for 6 appointments	£3576.60 - £4440

* Also important to factor in potential fines for keeping families or households who are pregnant in B&B for over 6 weeks. This could be as much as £4000 (<https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/council-fined-for-housing-family-in-bb-for-weeks-35947>).

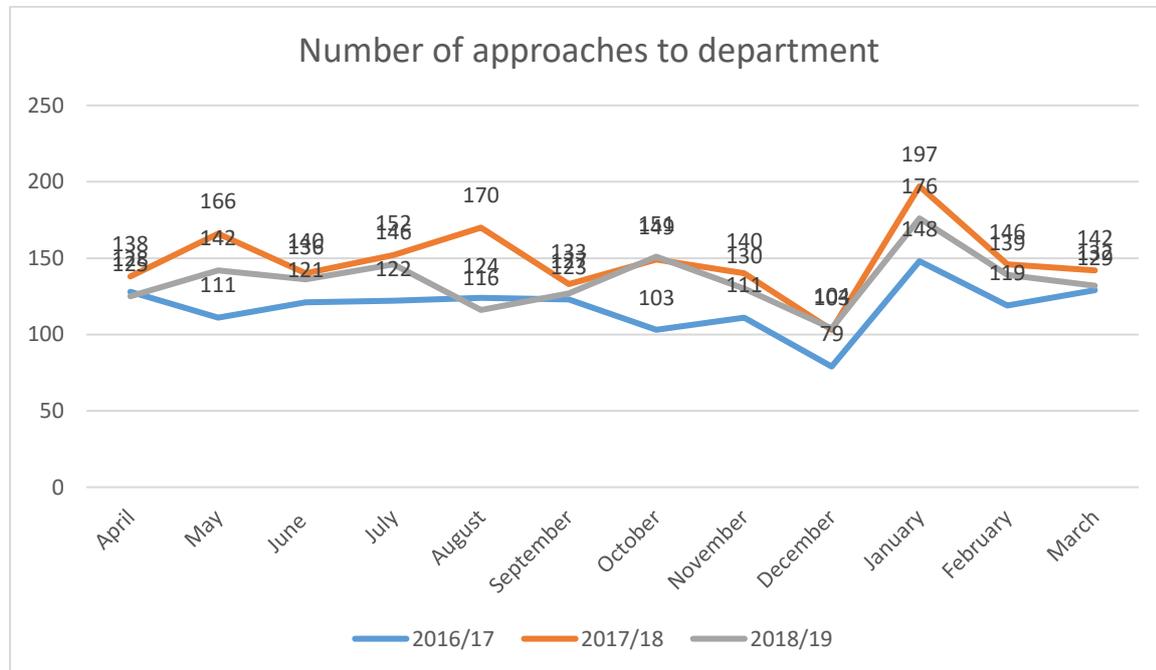
2.4 The rise of single people and couples in bed and breakfast is comparative across all other Local Authorities in Hampshire, and also echoed across the South East, as picked up in South East Homelessness Forums.

2.5 The Homelessness Reduction Act has seen, as predicted, a decrease in the number of section 184 'main duty' decisions. In 2017/18, before the introduction of the HRA, there were 210 section 184 decisions. In 2018/19 there have been 56 section 184 decisions. Furthermore, 19 of these 56 decisions were made in April/May 2018 – which implies that these were decisions made for legacy cases from old legislation – rather than decisions made under the HRA.



2.6 With the number of section 184 decisions and accepted homeless decisions decreasing, there are less households moving into temporary accommodation. The focus on helping all households is clear, with the number of accepted households in temporary accommodation more than halved in the last 12 months.

2.7 The reduction in the number being housed in temporary accommodation means solutions are being found for applicants within the prevention and relief stages, with over 60% of applicants accepted into the prevention or relief duty having the duty ended by securing suitable accommodation for a period of at least 6 months.



2.8 The number of applicants approaching the council has been fairly consistent when compared against previous years. Southwark Council, who trailblazed the HRA in 17/18, reported that there was a 33% increase in approaches to their council as part of the HRA. Basingstoke and Deane’s numbers have not increased, which shows that the work that was being done previously was correct and up to the standard expected by central Government, and shows that no household has been turned away for advice and assistance, which may have been occurring in other Local Authorities. Other predicted impacts of the HRA has been apparent however, with the vast additional workload in order to comply with the statutory duties, as well as much longer interview times and case retention, with much more information required from applicants as more data is required by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

2.9 The below table shows the extent of the increase in workload from previous years. Roughly 20% of the team’s caseload require intensive prevention or relief support, which takes roughly 4x longer than a case that requires ‘pre-prevention’ advice and assistance, or a case that approached prior to the introduction of the HRA. As a result of this, 2x additional staff members have been recruited on a temporary basis in order to manage this workload. If the team did not have this extra resource, this would have to be pulled from other areas of the service which would see the team unable to meet its other objectives.

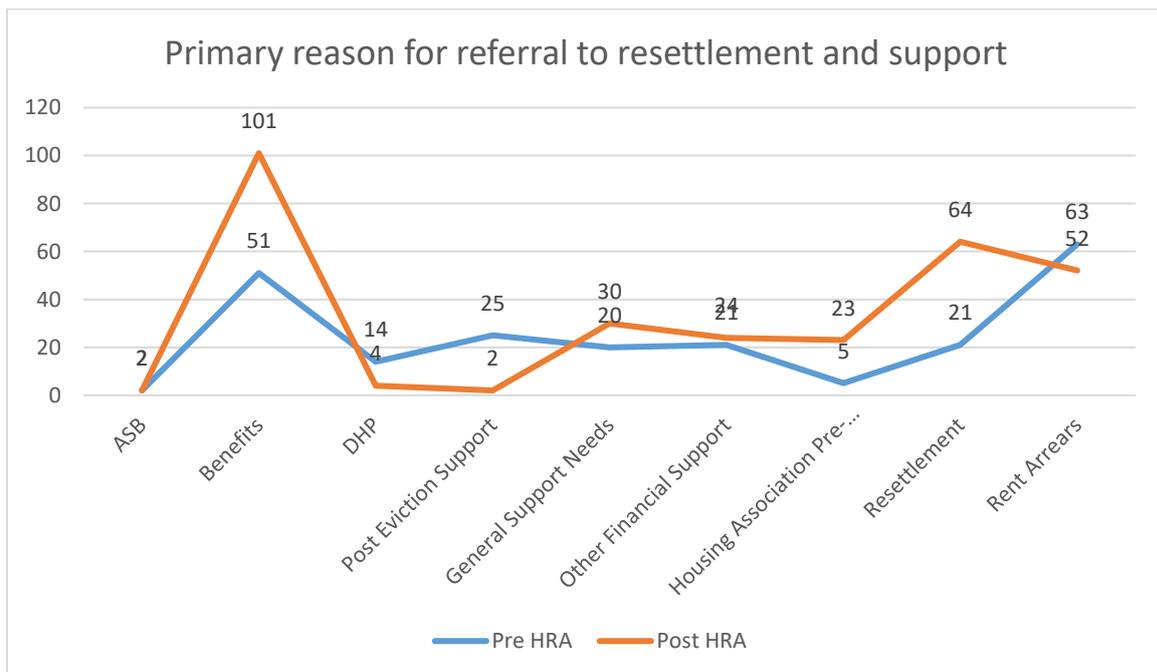
	Number of approaches per year	Assessment, advice, prevention and decision	Pre-prevention (2 hrs per case)	Intensive Prevention/Relief Support (8 hours per case)	Total hours spent on cases

		(2hrs per case)			
Pre-HRA	1700	1700	0	0	3400
Post-HRA	1600	0	1300	300	5000

2.10 The preparation for the HRA took months of work inside and outside of working hours to ensure there was a smooth transition from old to new legislation. The tasks that the council undertook to prepare for the implementation of the new legislation and statutory duties were:

- creating letter templates for roughly 40 different duties under the HRA
- creating procedure for Duty to Refer
- creating procedure for non-cooperation/ ceasing contact
- Amend housing allocations policy to incorporate changes to law
- Training for partners such as HCC/ probation/ mental health/ RPs
- Briefing for DMT and two sessions for members
- Visiting Southwark to see results of their trailblazer
- Trialling, customising and training team on new computer system (Jigsaw)
- Picking up issues with Jigsaw and maintaining contact with them
- Creating specific booklets for different groups and publishing on website as required to comply with the legislation
- Create new paperwork for meetings not on Jigsaw as well as new consent form
- Creating user-friendly flowchart to guide Homeless Prevention Officers due to various legislative changes to ensure effective working process
- Preparing for a new way of working through Reflective Practice sessions and training around working in a Trauma Informed way for the new engagement and supporting role.

3. Resettlement and Support, Social Inclusion and MEAM



3.1 The above table shows the increased support needs of the client group that the housing department has seen, as per our new statutory duties to offer and direct to support. Post-HRA the resettlement and support team have worked with 331 cases, and a total of 3964 hours working on cases. Pre-HRA there was a total of 2300 hours working on cases. As this increase had been predicted there has been additional recruitment for the resettlement and support team.

3.2 Cases referred to resettlement and support for benefit reasons have increased by 100% post-HRA, which coincides with the transition from housing benefit to Universal Credit in Basingstoke and Deane. This requires more support as this is a far more arduous process than claiming housing benefit.

3.3 In correlation with what Homeless Prevention Officers are experiencing, there has been a 50% increase in referrals to resettlement and support for general support needs – showing the constantly changing needs of our customers.

3.4 There has been over a 350% increase in referrals to resettlement and support for pre- eviction support with housing associations. This shows the high level of prevention work across the team. This approach has shown to be effective, as the numbers referred for post- eviction support has dropped from 25 to just 2.

3.5 Those requiring general resettlement support has increased by over 200%. This highlights the work across the team for those who have successfully moved into alternative accommodation where eviction cannot be prevented.

3.6 The financial reasons for referrals to resettlement and support have remained roughly the same pre and post-HRA, in line with welfare reform, though referrals for DHP support has decreased from 14 to just 4, highlighting the effective budget management and financial assistance being offered in the first instance, as well as assistance in getting customers into work.

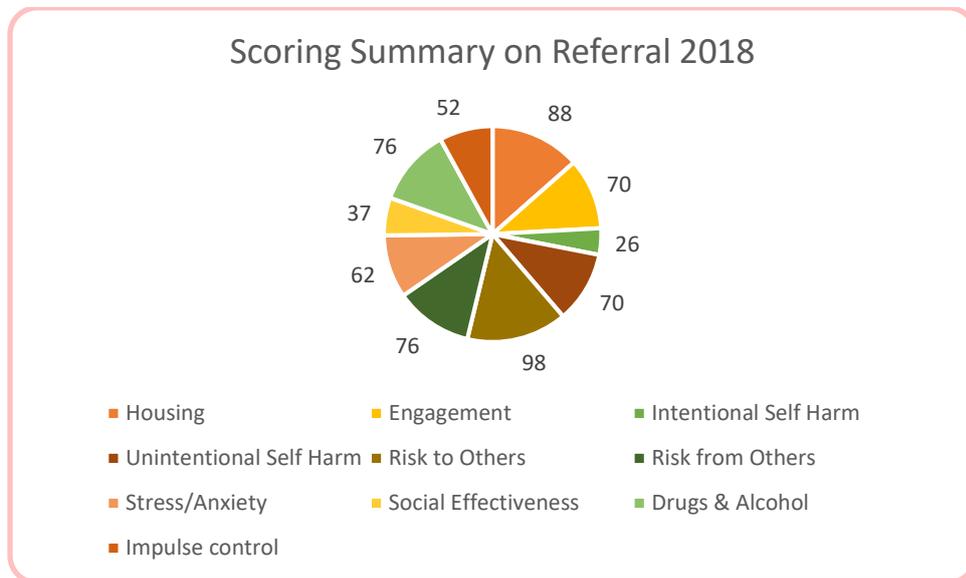
3.7 The social inclusion services consist of four main commissioned service providers: FirstPoint floating support; Julian House homeless outreach team; May Place House hostel and Homegroup stage 2 and move-on accommodation.

3.8 These four services have accepted a combined total of 744 clients into their respective services in 2018/19, and have refused just 4 – a 99.5% acceptance rate of some of the most vulnerable customers within the service. This shows the effective procurement and robust contract management of the department, ensuring that as many people as possible receive the intensive help and support they require.

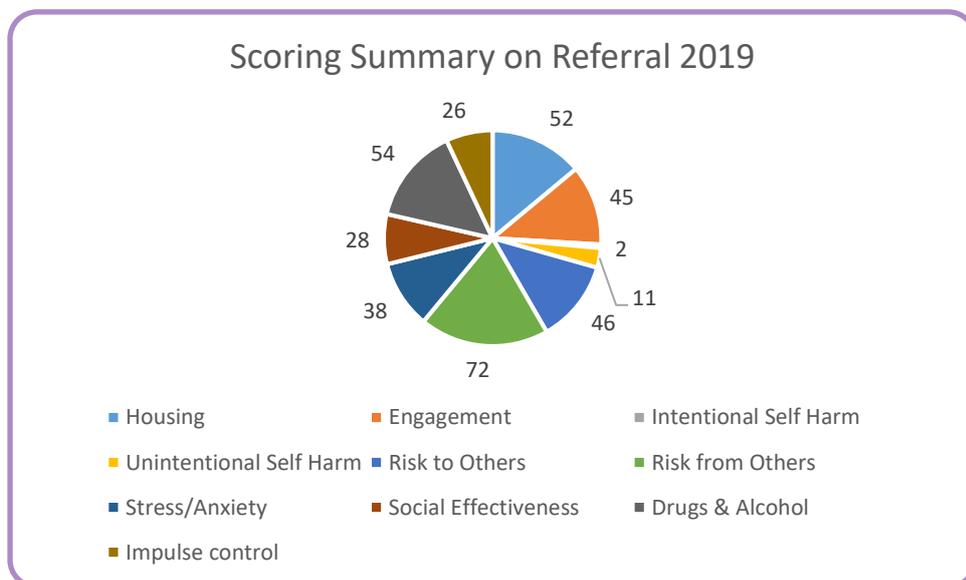
3.9 There have been 603 positive move-ons from these services in 2018/19 compared to just 33 negative move-ons – a 94.8% positive move-on rate. This again highlights the positive attitude towards those who are at a crisis point in their lives and often have high support needs.

3.10 Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) takes a multi-agency approach to assist those clients who are the highest support needs and a collaborative working approach is used to assist these clients accordingly. Referrals are made through various agencies and scoring on referral is based on a scale of 0-4 for numerous reasons.

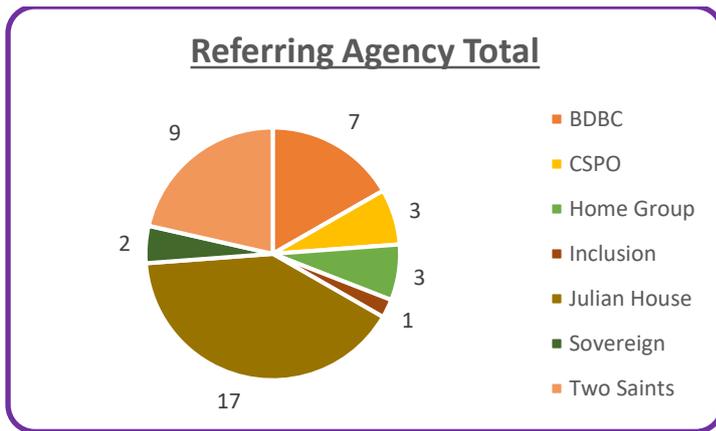
3.11 Since 2018, 42 referrals have been made into MEAM, with 22 of these now closed and 2 scoring too low to be included in MEAM. 18 cases are still open to MEAM.



3.12 Housing accounted for 13.4% of the scoring from the referrals made in 2018. Only 'risk to others' accounted for a larger percentage of the scoring, showing the vital role housing plays within MEAM.

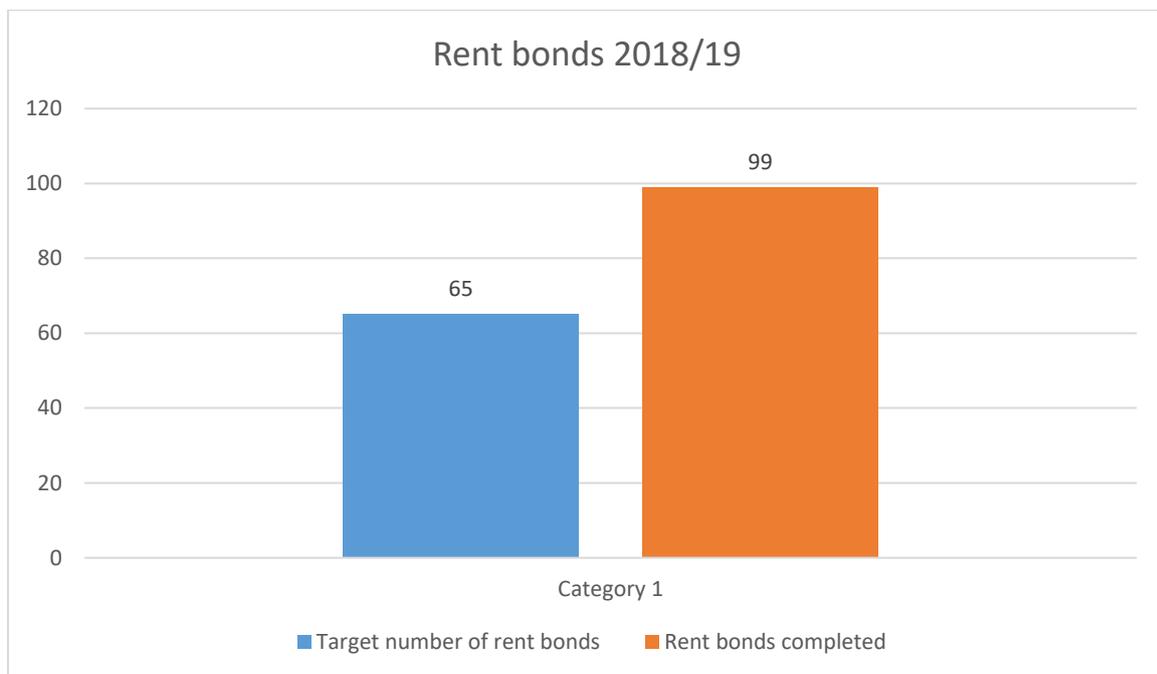


3.13 Housing accounted for 13.9% of the scoring in 2019, a similar level to 2018. Those at risk from others and those with drug and alcohol issues only scored higher than housing. This again shows that housing often is a key consideration for the most vulnerable, and the positive work conducted by all agencies have seen over half of the referrals into MEAM closed. Only two of these closed cases were for negative reasons, with one being sentenced to prison and one for non-engagement. The average number of days clients are open to MEAM is 112.7



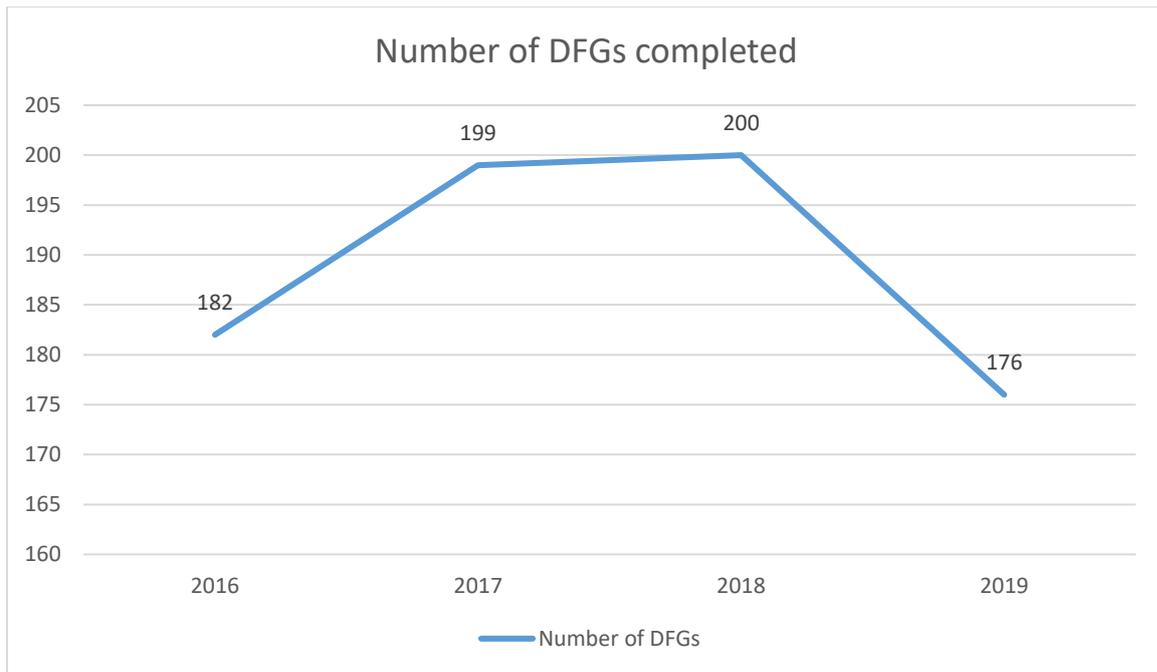
3.14 Basingstoke and Deane are the referral source for 16.7% of the total referrers into MEAM. Julian House, who interact with customers on the most intense level, are unsurprisingly the main referrers into MEAM, accounting for 40.5% of referrals.

4. Rent Bond and Private Sector Housing



4.1 The yearly target number of completed rent bonds for 2018/19 was 65. The team managed over 150% of this target, with 99 rent bonds completed for the year. An increase of x0.5 FTE has been recruited since June 2018 which has allowed the team to focus on achieving this figure.

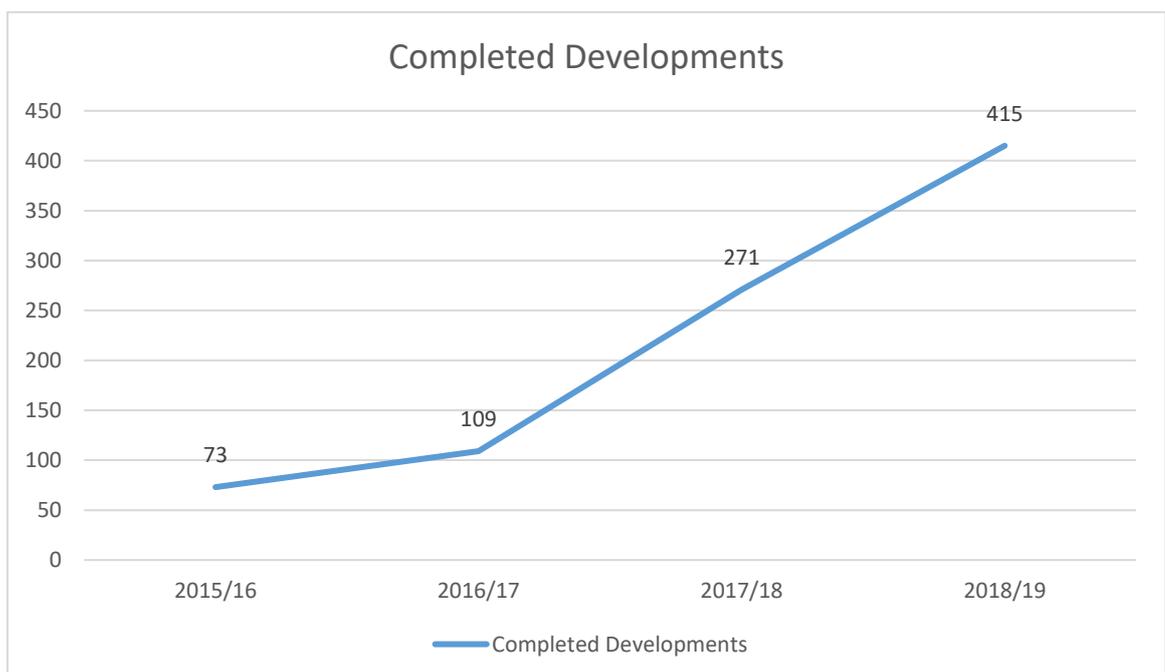
4.2 On top of this figure, 65 loan agreements were issued to customers to assist them into suitable accommodation. The Landlord Liaison Officers managed to secure 28 new properties from new and existing landlords the team work with. There are over 250 live bonds in place, through almost 200 landlords.



4.3 There has been a consistent number of Discretionary Facilities Grants awarded over the past four years by the council’s Housing Standards Team. It is crucial to maintain this offer to residents to assist those who are struggling to continue to live within their own homes through making adaptations within the property. This is reflected in the Housing and Homelessness Strategy under the ‘Housing Choice and Quality’ priority.

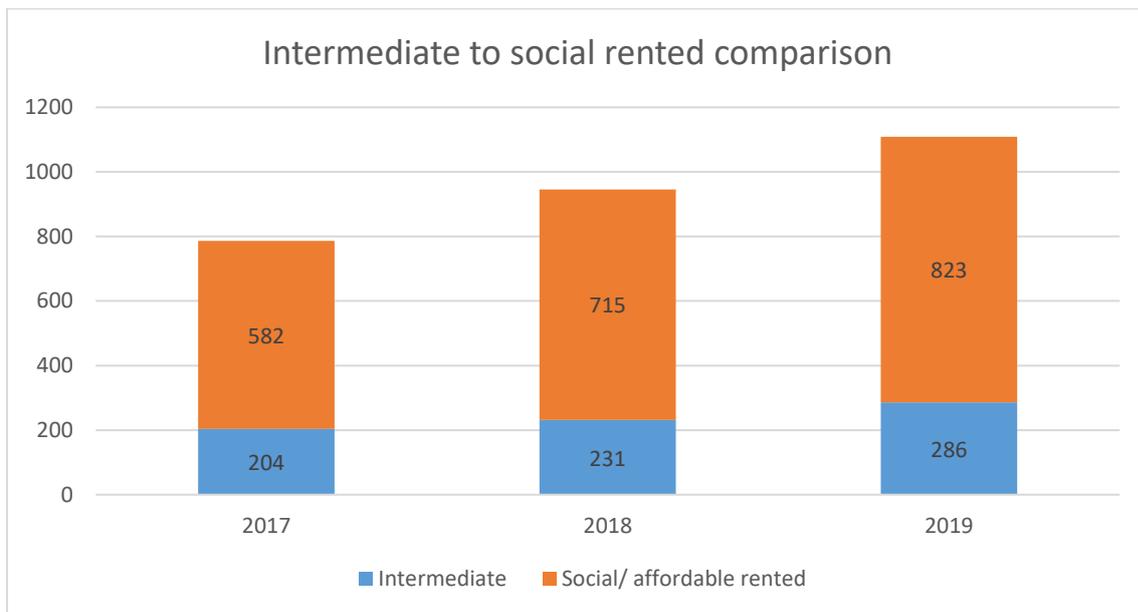
4.4 The Housing Standards Team also maintain the Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) offer within the borough and have 84 licensed HMOs – and a further 62 HMOs which do not require a license – on their books. The HMO offer is pivotal in ensuring that the council is making the most of the resources available.

5. Housing Delivery and Other Strategic Priorities

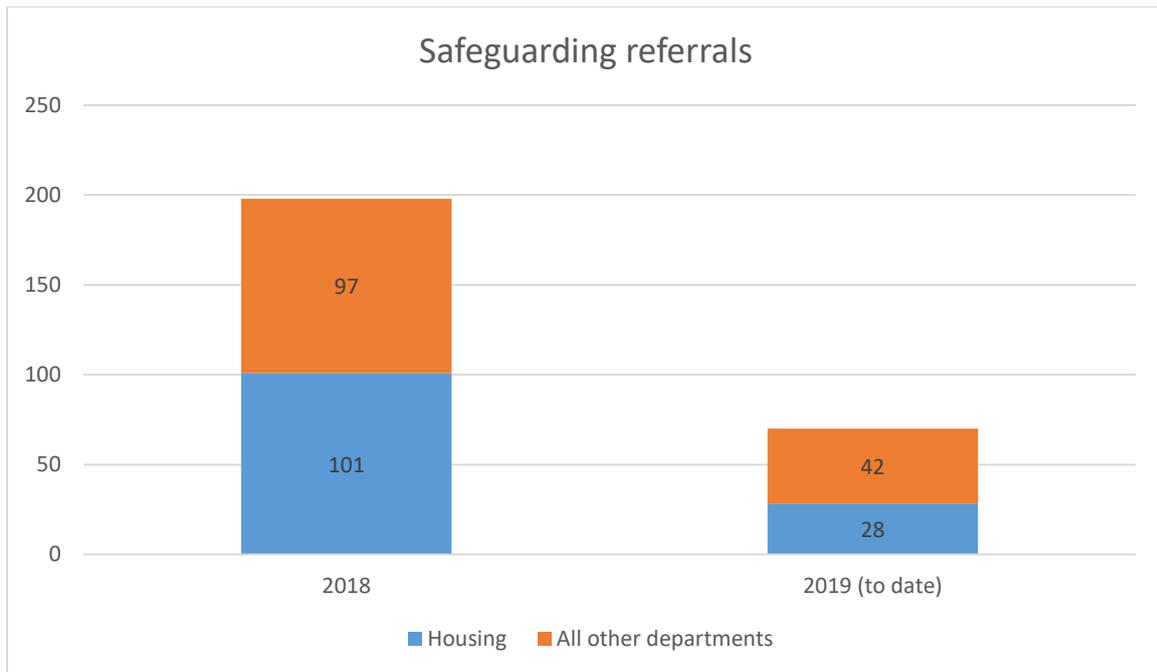


5.1 There is a steep increase in the number of affordable housing units being completed by Registered Providers (RPs) over the past 4 years. This includes units for social and affordable rent, as well as intermediate forms of accommodation such as shared ownership. This is still expected to increase, with projected completion figures for 2019/20 estimated at 579.

5.2 The housing team host bi-annual Help to Buy South events in-house, working in partnership with the Help to Buy contractors as awarded by Homes England. Every event has been a success, with most events attracting at least 300 attendees. Roughly 90% of those attending reported that they got the information they needed and 95% reported that they would recommend a similar event to others. This has therefore proved to be a consistently hugely successful event.



5.3 The numbers of low cost home ownership properties available for residents are far outweighed by the number of properties for social or affordable rent available through the register. Improving access to low cost home ownership options is therefore a key aspect of the upcoming Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2020-2024.



5.4 The team also deal with some of the most vulnerable clients that approach the council, and have to manage difficult conversations effectively. The team are exposed to some sensitive information to handle, where the Trauma Informed Care way of working and Reflective Practice model helps to build resilience.

5.5 As a result, the primary source of safeguarding referrals are submitted by the housing team, with over half of the entire organisations safeguarding reports coming from housing in 2018. In 2019 to date, this number is just under 50% of the council's safeguarding referrals.

5.6 The housing team currently monitors/oversees numerous contracts, all of which involves financial support, budgeting and monitoring, creating and maintaining quarterly reports, performance management and creating snapshot data. The contracts dealt with or bid for in 2018/19 include:

- Basingstoke Homelessness Psychology Service
- Assertive Rough Sleeper Outreach- Julian House
- May Place House – Two Saints
- Mary Rose Court – Homegroup
- First Point Community Support – YouTrust
- Rapid Rehousing Pathway – Navigator Role
- Private Rented Sector Access
- Rough Sleeping Initiative
- Camrose Day Centre
- Night Light Winter Shelter

5.7 This does not include additional separate contracts held with Sovereign for short-term accommodation.

5.8 The housing team holds ownership over numerous multi-agency meetings to ensure effective delivery, including:

- Social Inclusion Partnership
- Social Inclusion Partnership Development Group
- Making Every Adult Matter
- Move on and Referral.

5.9 The housing team is a key partner at the following multi-agency meetings:

- Vulnerabilities Operation Group
- Early Help Hub
- Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
- High Intensity User Group
- Priority Action Group
- Homeless Officer Group
- Strategic Homeless Officer Group
- North Hampshire Mental Health Support and Steering Group
- Social Inclusion Advisory Group
- Hampshire Enabling Network
- Local Delivery System – Mental Health Group
- Extra Care Housing Nomination Meeting
- Health and Wellbeing Partnership
- Children, Young People and Families Operational Group

5.10 The housing team have recruited to 20 posts since 2017. However, this is not solely down to staff members leaving. The increase in responsibilities for the department and the focus on staff growth and improving opportunities has seen 7 covers relating to maternity leave, 5 new posts created and 2 promotions out of these 20 posts.

5.11 In 2019/20 a review of the housing service structure was undertaken to ensure resources are deployed to optimum impact in light of HRA changes, increases in housing register / nomination activities and new initiatives such as LCHO. The new structure will commence from April 2020 and will provide:

- additional strategic and enabling capacity;
- additional resources to the housing register and LCHO;
- focussed staff resources for MEAM / rough sleepers;
- extending the temporary additional resources to support HRA work.