

Review of homelessness in Southwark

2023

Introduction

This review of homelessness in Southwark provides an assessment of the support, assistance and advice available to homeless people and those threatened with homelessness in the Borough. It is an update on the homelessness review carried out in 2017. The scope of the review encompasses those services directly provided by or commissioned through Southwark Council and captures:

- The level of homelessness in the borough
- The resources available to carry out homelessness duties
- Activities that are carried out which prevent homelessness, secure accommodation for homeless people, and provide support to people who are or may become homeless

The review was undertaken in late 2022 and into 2023 during a period of on-going disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the cost of living crisis and the UK leaving the EU. This has affected all service provision in some way, as well as the demand for homelessness services. It has also provided an opportunity to re-imagine how a modern and future-thinking homelessness prevention service can be most effective.

We have undergone a period of significant change at a national and local level, including substantial welfare and housing policy reform. Most notably, the Homelessness Reduction Act which was introduced in 2018.

The main changes to homelessness services introduced by the Act are:

- Two new duties: duty to prevent and relieve homelessness
- A requirement to carry out an assessment and personalised housing plan (PHP)
- Public bodies now have a duty to refer people whom they know are threatened with homelessness
- New review opportunities; applicants have the right to ask for a review of any points of the new legislation.

Along with this, a new data reporting tool; Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (HCLIC) was introduced to capture Local Authority work on homelessness. This is a new quarterly data return for all local authorities and requires each case to report on 155 different fields that capture an applicant's situation. The majority of the data contained in this report comes from these data sets and summarises the financial years 2018/19 - 2022/23, however more recent evidence is used where this is available to provide a more accurate portrayal of current homelessness service provision or performance.

It should also be noted, that as this reporting tool was introduced in 2018/19, data from that year is not always representative due to its experimental nature and in subsequent years, data has been more accurately recorded. Similarly, as mentioned above, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the demand for homelessness services and with the introduction of restrictions in early 2020, some data sets will reflect the increase in demand seen. Therefore, it is necessary to be mindful of the context of the data when analysing it as part of this strategic planning process.

We have also seen changes to homelessness duties with the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This introduced automatic priority need to survivors of domestic abuse and widened the definition of this term in order to increase help available to this group.

This review will outline the core demographics approaching the Housing Solutions service, the services available as well as the outcomes achieved for clients. It will also explore the wider context of housing and demographics present in Southwark and the unique picture this presents when looking at homelessness in the Borough.

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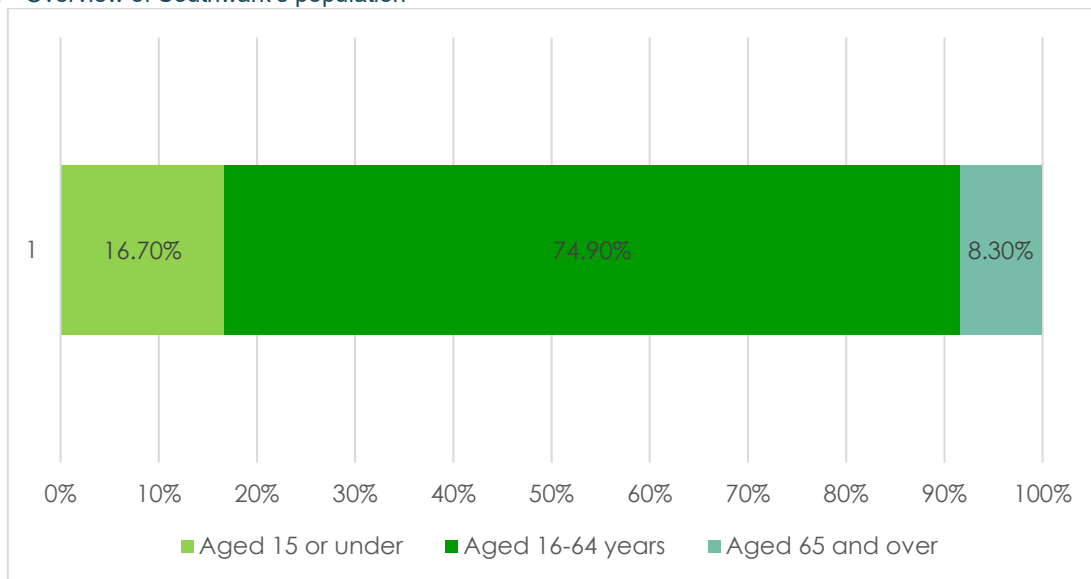
1.0 Southwark – an overview

The following section provides an overview of Southwark, including demographic, equality and housing market information. This is useful to consider when looking at homelessness and the responses to tackle these issues as they are often interlinked. The area is undergoing rapid and continual change with high levels of private investment and development but the Borough also has areas of high deprivation, as well as a very large and diverse population.

1.1 Southwark Demographics- Population breakdown

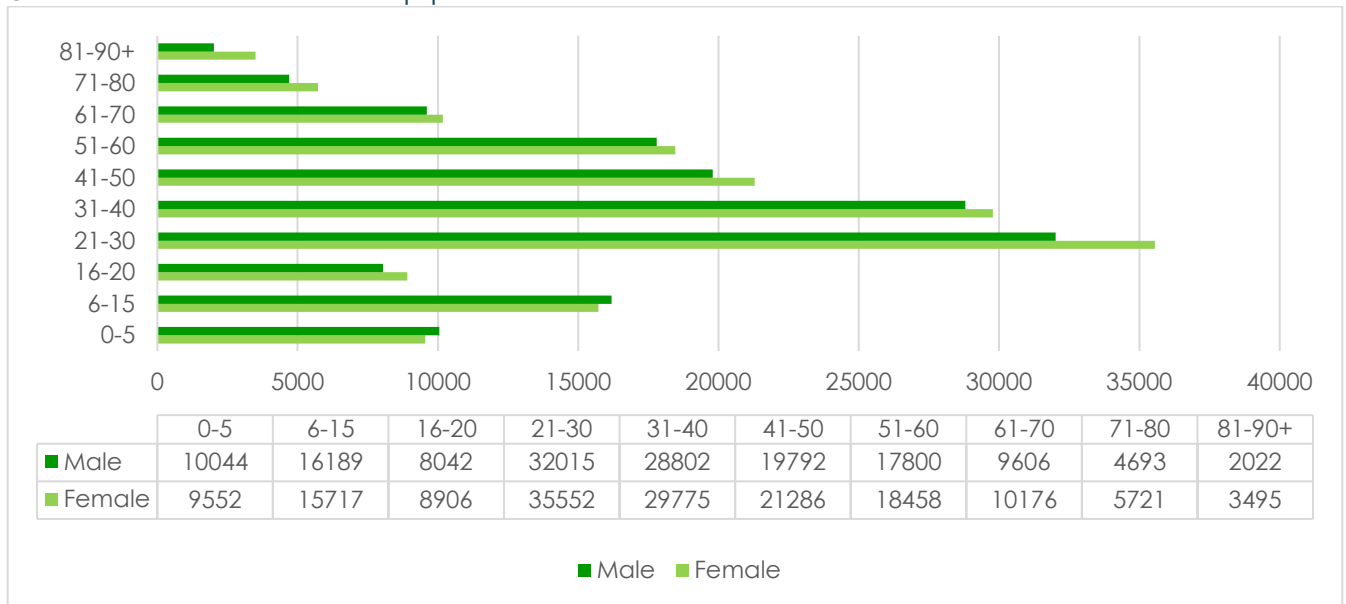
In 2021, Southwark had 307,700 residents. This is a drop of 3.8% from 2020 (320,017 residents.) This is likely due to the pandemic and changes in immigration from the UK's exit from the EU. Southwark has seen an increase of 15.5% in people aged 65 and over, 8.4% in people 15-64 and decrease of 3.8% in children under 15 since 2011. The average age in Southwark is 33.6 years.

Chart 1– Overview of Southwark's population



Source: ONS, Census 2021

Chart 2 – Breakdown of Southwark’s population



Source: ONS, Census 2021

Southwark’s population density is 10,659 per square km with the highest density in the north of the borough. According to the Census, Southwark has a lower population density than neighbouring borough Lambeth but higher than in Lewisham.¹

1.2 Southwark Demographics- Household composition

Southwark has a high number of single person households in the north of the Borough, with the larger households (4 or more household members) in the centre of the Borough. The ten year change since 2011 has seen a fall in single households (-0.3%), -1.3% in 3 person households and -1.1% in 4 person households. There was however, a rise of 2.7% in 2 person households.² This change may have been due to the impact of the pandemic, which saw many families move out of London.

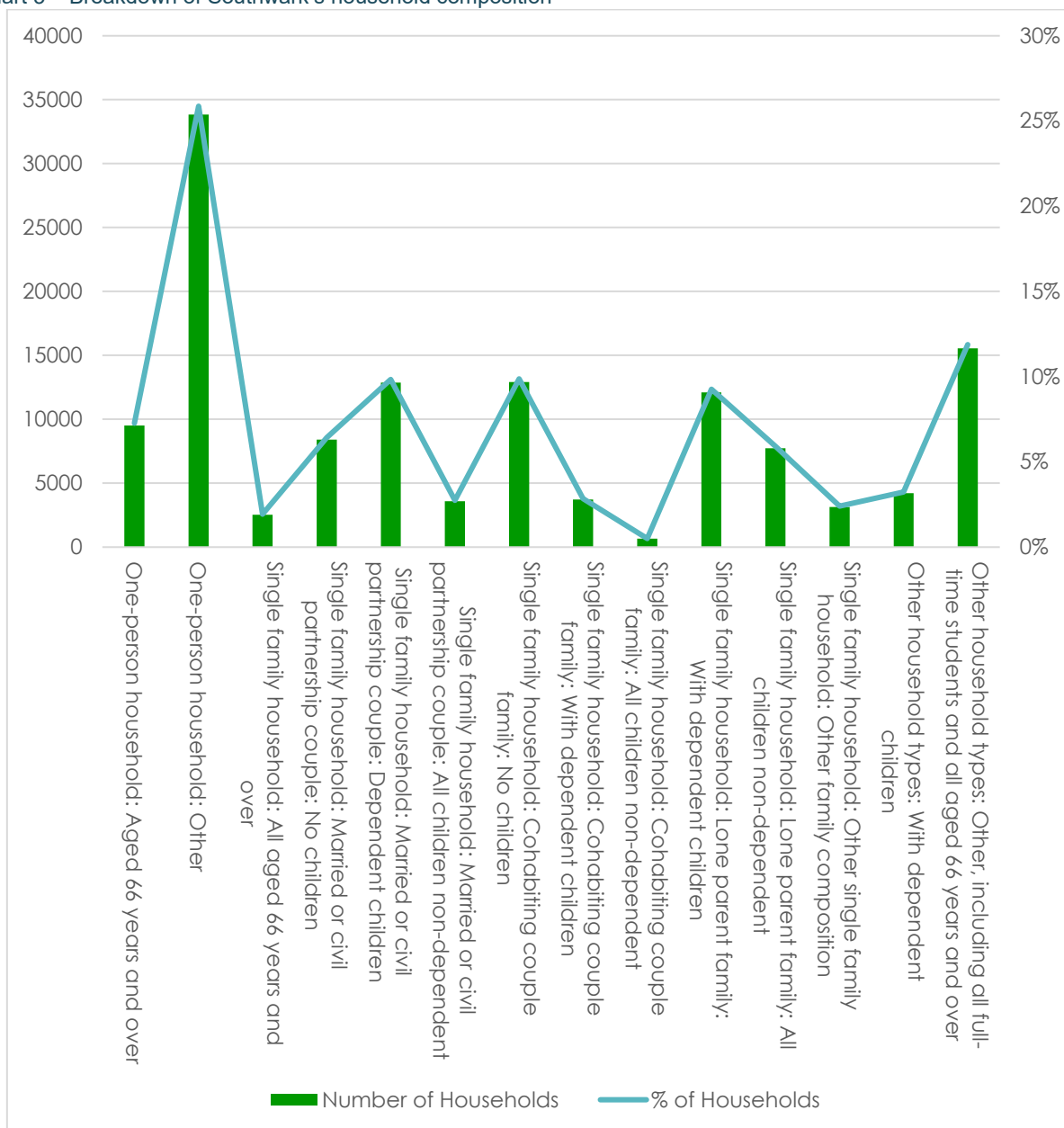
In the annual survey of Londoners conducted by the GLA, single people in Southwark, with no children (the largest household group in the Borough), with long term mental health conditions, low food security and living in social housing were the most likely group to report feeling lonely often.³ It is therefore important to note this key group in Southwark who will be impacted by health and wellbeing inequality.

¹ [Population density - Census Maps, ONS](#)

² [Household size - Census Maps, ONS](#)

³ Southwark’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2027

Chart 3 – Breakdown of Southwark’s household composition



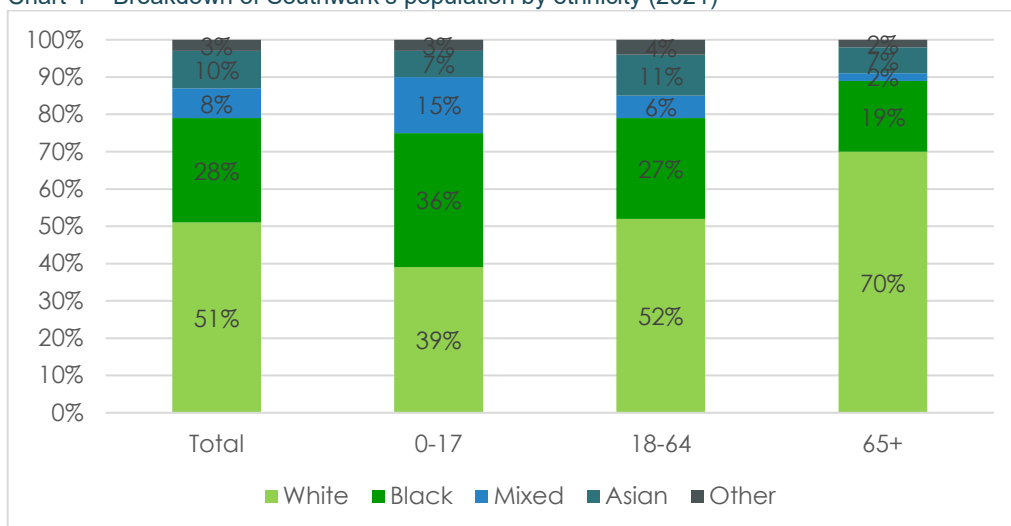
Source: ONS, Census 2021

1.3 Southwark Demographics- Ethnicity and Nationality breakdown

Southwark is a proudly diverse Borough, with a large proportion of black and mixed ethnic backgrounds with 4 in 10 people were born outside of the UK. The area with the largest proportion of people with a non-UK passport in in the centre of the Borough around Burgess Park, where 34% of people reported this. Since 2011, the change in ethnic group percentages was largely unchanged, with the biggest change being a -2.8% in White ethnicity and an increase of 3% in those with ‘Other’ as their ethnic group. ⁴

⁴ [Passports held - Census Maps, ONS](#)

Chart 4 – Breakdown of Southwark’s population by ethnicity (2021)



Source: Southwark JSNA Annual Report: 2022

It is important to note that Southwark has a large Latin American population, largely centred towards the middle of the borough. The census and other sources are not always reliable in capturing this population demographic as they can be without a fixed address or legal immigration status and many report their ethnicity as ‘other’ due to limited reporting options. It is also important to note that often there is also undercounting of this group as many have an EEA passport which means their nationality is not recorded as their country of birth.⁵

71.6% of people in Southwark identified as having a UK identity⁶, and when looking at passports held; the lowest percentage (60%) of people with a UK passport was seen in the Burgess Park and Butler’s Wharf area of the Borough.⁷

1.4 Southwark Demographics – Gender identity and Sexual Orientation

The Research from the Office of National Statistics shows that Southwark has one of the largest LGBTQ+ populations in the country, with 7% (23,000 people) of the adults in the borough identifying as part of this community, compared to only 4% of the entire London population and 3% nationally.⁸

1.23% of Southwark’s population reported to the census as having a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth. The highest proportion of people reporting this was seen in the Burgess Park area, where 8.1% of people reported their gender identity this way.⁹ This area also has the reported largest percentage of people who reported that they identify as LGBTQ+.¹⁰

1.5 Southwark Demographics - Disability and impairment

The DWP estimates that there 14% of residents in inner London have a disability. The largest reported disability is mobility followed by stamina/fatigue and then mental health. There are also estimates that there are over 25,000 unpaid carers in the Borough which

⁵ Latin Americans in Southwark: A Quantitative (census) Look

⁶ [National identity - Census Maps, ONS](#)

⁷ [Passports held - Census Maps, ONS](#)

⁸ Southwark JSNA Annual Report: 2022

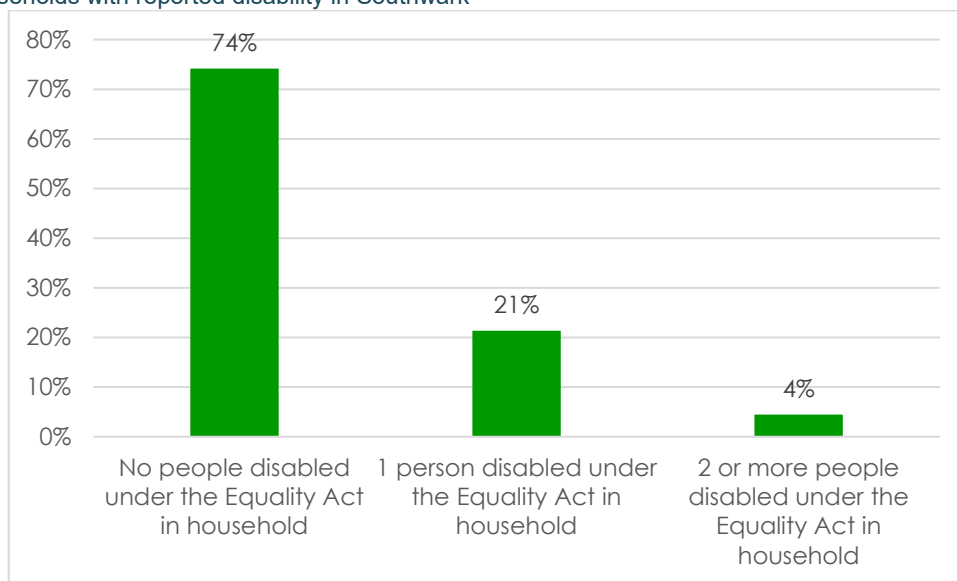
⁹ [Gender identity - Census Maps, ONS](#)

¹⁰ [Sexual orientation - Census Maps, ONS](#)

are expected to be disproportionately made up of women, people from Black African ethnic backgrounds and those that also have disability/complex needs.¹¹

A more in-depth analysis of the Borough by our Public Health department is available [here](#). The release of the census 2021 data has shown that 18% of Southwark's households have a member with a disability.¹² Comparatively, the inner London average in 2019 was 14%, which suggests Southwark has a higher percentage of people living with a disability than surrounding areas. It is also important to note that since 2011, the percentage of people reporting a disability under the equality act fell by 4%.¹³

Chart 5 – Households with reported disability in Southwark



Source: ONS, Census 2021

1.6 Southwark Demographics – Deprivation and health wellbeing in Southwark

The area is undergoing rapid and continual change with high levels of private investment and development, but the Borough also has areas of deprivation with 21% of Southwark's population ranked within the most deprived nationally. According to the Urban Health Index, which looks at 68 neighbourhoods across Southwark and Lambeth; in the South of the Borough, all neighbourhoods were ranked in the top 20 of areas, whilst several of the neighbourhoods in the middle and towards the North of the Borough were ranked in the bottom 20. Southwark has a more polarised distribution of neighbourhoods compared to neighbouring Borough of Lambeth.¹⁴

When looking at the overall health and wellbeing of the Borough's population, we can see that certain aspects of health are significantly poorer in the Borough than with the London average. For example, 64,700 people are reported to have a common mental health

¹¹ Southwark JSNA Annual Report: 2022

¹² [Disability age standardised - Census Maps, ONS](#)

¹³ Southwark JSNA Annual Report: 2022

¹⁴ Southwark JSNA Annual Report: 2022

disorder and admittance to emergency departments for those under 6 were much higher in 2022.¹⁵

There are also disparities between areas in the Borough. As noted above, the North and centre of the Borough has more inequalities than the South. In the Faraday Ward which covers areas of Walworth and Burgess Park, 32% of children under 16 live in poverty compared to 5% in Dulwich Village, (1.5 miles away.) When comparing the same wards further, we see that male life expectancy in Faraday is 79 years compared to 87 in Dulwich.¹⁶

We also need to consider the impact of Covid-19 on the health and wellbeing of Southwark's population. As already discussed, the Borough has a high population of people from ethnic minority backgrounds, who are living in the more deprived areas of Southwark. Within these areas, we saw higher risks to Covid-19 due to many working in front facing roles, higher vaccine hesitancy from social, historical and religious factors and a higher presence of co-morbidities associated with Covid-19 complications.¹⁷ Mortality rates in the most deprived areas were double those in the South of the Borough.¹⁸

It is important to note that structural racism, and discrimination towards those in the LGBTQI+ communities, can exacerbate health inequalities with differences experienced in experience of health services which were further exacerbated by the pandemic.

1.7 Breakdown of Housing Tenure in Southwark

The percentage of social rent properties has been decreasing annually for some time, but Southwark does remain the biggest council landlord in London and has the biggest council house-building programme in the country. There has in turn been an increase in private rents in the Borough, whilst those owned outright/owned with mortgage have remained steady. 31% of all households in Southwark own their property (largely towards the South of the borough), or own with a mortgage. 40% of properties are socially rented which is still relatively high (largely the centre and North of the Borough) and 29% are private rented (mostly evenly spread from the very centre of the borough and the north).¹⁹

¹⁵ The value of partnership working to support residents during COVID-19; Southwark's Annual Public Health Report 2022

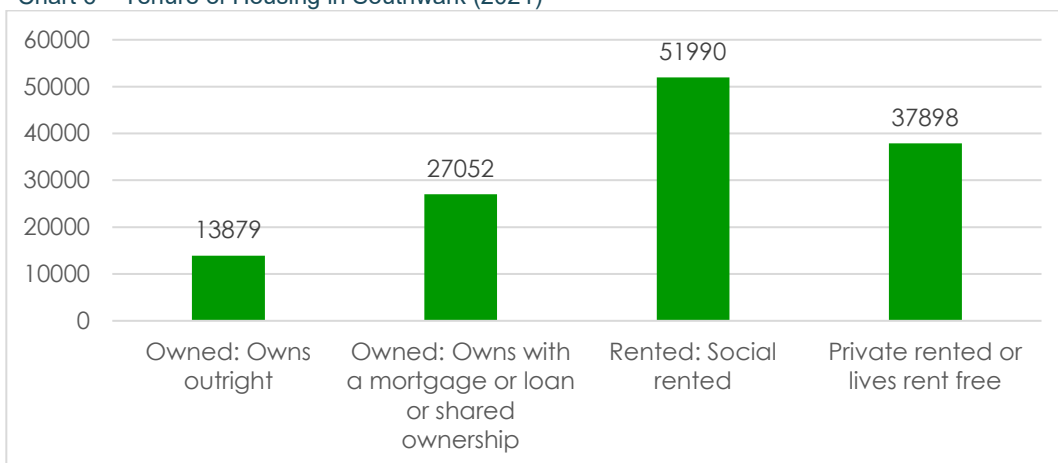
¹⁶ The value of partnership working to support residents during COVID-19; Southwark's Annual Public Health Report 2022

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¹⁸ Southwark's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2027

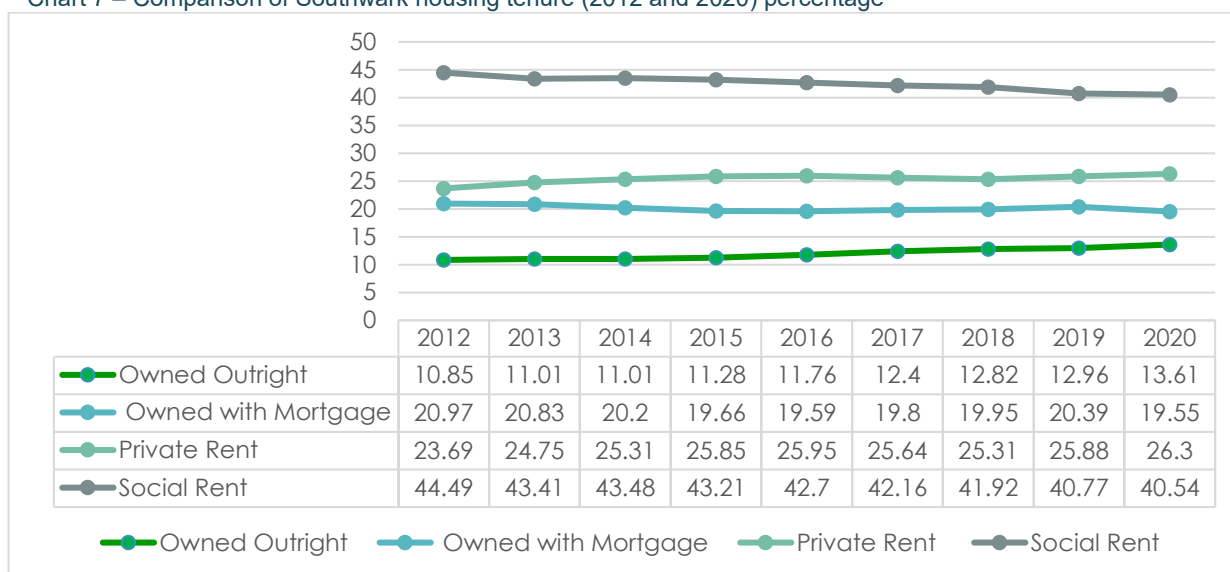
¹⁹ [Tenure of household - Census Maps, ONS](#)

Chart 6 – Tenure of Housing in Southwark (2021)



Source: ONS, Census 2021

Chart 7 – Comparison of Southwark housing tenure (2012 and 2020) percentage



Source: ONS, Subnational estimates of dwellings by tenure, England

Table 1 – Age and Housing Tenure

	Owned: Owns Outright	Owned: Owns with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership	Social Rent	Private Rent/Rent Free	All tenures
15 and under	0%	0%	0.02%	0.02%	0.01%
16-64	61%	96%	79%	97%	86%
65+	39%	4%	21%	3%	14%

Source: Census 2021

Table 2 –Southwark’s average private rents compared to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) (2023)

	Lower Quartile Rent	Upper Quartile Rent	LHA Rate
Room	£700	£900	£515
Studio	£1050	£1250	£1146
One Bedroom	£1300	£1750	£1146
Two Bedroom	£1600	£2250	£1346
Three Bedroom	£2000	£2700	£1670
Four + Bedrooms	£2775	£3725	£3650

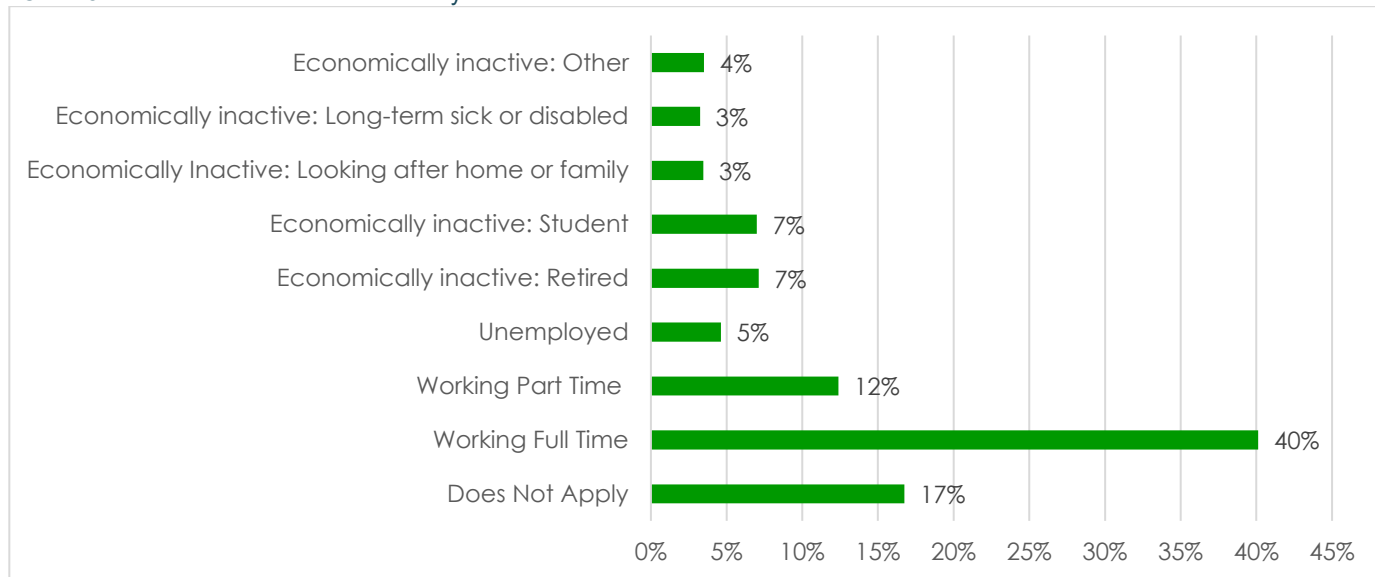
From the table above, we can see that the LHA rate is much lower than upper quartile rents and in most cases it is below lower quartile rents also. It is becoming increasingly harder to source affordable rents for those receiving welfare benefits and/or those on lower incomes. We are also seeing an increase in the amount people spend on rent as a percentage of their total income, this is happening across all income brackets. The ONS has estimated that in London, only those on a higher income quartile would be able to rent without spending more than 30% of their income.

It is also important to consider whether these homes are overcrowded, occupied or under occupied based on the number of bedrooms available. In 2021, 48% of households reported to be occupied, or in other words, using all bedrooms, without being overcrowded or under occupied. The most overcrowded area, was around Burgess Park and Peckham North with an average of 16% being overcrowded by at least one bedroom. Conversely, in the south of the borough around Dulwich Park and Herne Hill, 52% of households were under occupying by 2 or more bedrooms.²⁰

1.8 Employment and Income

Southwark has around 233,400 working age people with 40,200 people not in work. The most common reasons for this are the high number of students (c.16, 500) and those with medical needs preventing them from working (c.10, 000). Average incomes are in line with national averages at £33,848. However, 44% earn below £30,000 per year.²¹

Chart 8 – Breakdown of economic activity in Southwark



Source: ONS, Census 2021

Compared to England as a whole, Southwark has a lower unemployment rate, with current figures showing it to be 0.3% lower (3.6% compared to 3.9%).²² Overall, 70.7% of the population in the Borough are economically active, but the percentage of people who are

²⁰ [Occupancy rating for bedrooms - Census Maps, ONS](#)

²¹ Southwark JSNA Annual Report: 2022

²² [Southwark Economy | Labour Market & Industries \(varbes.com\)](#)

working full time (75%) is lower than other Boroughs such as Lambeth. Around 10% of those not currently working have never worked and 14% of the total working age population have no formal qualifications.²³

2.0 The Council's duties and team overviews

The term 'homelessness' can describe a variety of circumstances that an individual or family may find themselves in, not always relating to whether they actually have a roof over their head. This report uses the terminology set out below as a means of describing these circumstances and the statutory obligations that local authorities have in relation to them:

- **Applicants with a 'duty owed'** refers to those people who have made a homeless application to their local authority and have met the necessary criteria set out in legislation to be accepted as eligible for assistance (according to immigration status) and are homeless/threatened with homelessness and therefore issued a homelessness prevention or relief duty.
- **Personal Housing Plan (PHP)**; the PHP is drawn up between a homeless applicant and their caseworker and is updated and reviewed throughout the customer journey. The PHP contains 'reasonable steps' that the council and customer agree to take in order to try and prevent/relieve their homelessness.
- **'Relief Duty'** refers to applicants who the local authority is satisfied are eligible and homeless under s.189B (2) Housing Act 1996 as amended by s.5 (2) Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The Local Authority must take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure suitable accommodation available for their occupation' for at least six months.
- **'Prevention Duty'** households are threatened with homelessness within 56 days under s.195 of the Housing Act 1996 as substituted by s.4 (2) Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This can include those in the private rented sector who have been issued a notice, or are struggling to pay their rent. The Local Authority has a duty to take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure that accommodation does not cease to be available.
- **A Section 184 decision** is issued when a local authority's homelessness inquiries have concluded and the applicant is owed a written notification of any further housing duties owed (if any) and if not owed then the reason for this is explained.

²³ [Highest level of qualification - Census Maps, ONS](#)

- **Section 193 (2) duty ‘main duty’**- this is the duty owed if a relief duty has ended and the applicant is in priority need, has a local connection and is not intentionally homeless. This duty is often referred to as a ‘main duty’ and requires the local authority to provide an offer of settled accommodation.
- **‘Not Homeless’** decisions refer to applicants who approached the local authority but were deemed to have suitable accommodation available to them for 6 or more months.
- **Priority need** groups include those with dependent children, pregnant, 16/17 year olds, those under 20 who were looked after children, those homeless in an emergency, those fleeing domestic abuse and vulnerable single people.
- **Non-priority homeless** people tend to be single people or childless couples who are not assessed as being in priority need and are only entitled to ‘advice and assistance’ from their local authority. Many single homeless people can be described as ‘hidden homeless’, which is to say that they could be ‘sofa surfing’; staying with friends or family and not accessing mainstream homelessness services. Estimating the levels of hidden homelessness locally or nationally is extremely challenging.
- **Intentionally homeless decision** is a section 184 decision that the applicant must deliberately have done, or failed to do, something in consequence of which they have ceased to occupy accommodation which was available to them.
- **Rough sleepers** are people who are literally roofless, bedded down on the street or in other locations where they may or may not be seen by the public. This group are a minority of the much larger population of homeless people. Housing legislation does not set out specific statutory duties to people who are sleeping rough but they would be provided with a ‘Relief Duty’ and assisted through this route.

2.1 Southwark Council’s homeless services

In Southwark, homelessness assessments are carried out by the council’s Housing Solutions service which have primarily been conducted remotely since March 2020 (see customer journey in appendix 13.1.1). Previous to this, the primary service access was based at the Homesearch Centre in Bournemouth Road, Peckham, which offered a front facing customer reception as well as interview space for applicants to meet with the team. This team also leads on offering housing advice, housing options and homelessness prevention and relief support to Southwark residents. A review of the office provision and how face to face appointments was conducted in early 2022 and the Bournemouth Road office has reopened in a new capacity since November 2022, see appendix 13.1.2 for a customer journey document for office attendance.

The service also has a specialist housing service team responsible for assisting rough sleepers, and coordinating access to and move-on of customers from supported housing as well as intensive support to end street homelessness. A breakdown of the Housing Solutions teams are below.

2.1.1 The Housing Solutions Teams

- **Gateway Team** – For most customers, this team is their first point of contact with the service. This team deal with general enquiries as well as establishing if a further assessment by their triage service is required. Triage staff will take a more in-depth assessment of the customer's circumstances and refer to other services if needed and/or book a homelessness application at the earliest available date. The gateway team will also request a booking for temporary accommodation if they have reason to believe the applicant is homeless and in priority need. This team also includes three prevention officers who will take homeless applications from single homeless households who are likely to be found not in priority need and will work intensively with this group to send them on viewings for private rented accommodation and relieve homelessness without the client requiring a section 184 decision.
- **Prevention and Relief teams** – These teams are responsible for taking and assessing homelessness applications. A Housing Solutions Officer (HSO) will complete an application and a more detailed focus is undertaken of the customer's eligibility for housing assistance, their housing circumstances (for consideration of assistance) and priority need for housing (for consideration of the provision of temporary accommodation). They will also draft a PHP with the customer and review this to try and prevent/relieve their homelessness.
- **Private Rented Sector Team** – This team take homelessness applications from anyone who is privately renting. They provide specialist advice on the rights and responsibilities of private tenants, landlords and agents with the aim to prevent homelessness and investigate allegations of harassment and illegal evictions within Southwark's private rented sector. Further to this, they work closely with the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Team to try and improve standards in the sector. This team has three prevention officers who work as a community link to external advice services to increase prevention work in the private rented sector.
- **Financial Inclusion Team (FIT)** - The FIT are responsible for the management and distribution of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and the Rent Arrears Fund (RAF). They also provide customers with income maximisation advice and information about securing employment.
- **Reviews Team** – This team completes any reviews requested by applicants on decisions made on their individual cases. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced several new instances where an applicant can request a review of a decision made by their caseworker.
- **Casework Support Team** -The team supports the functions of the Casework Housing Solutions team providing an admin function and assisting with service user enquiries and cases. They also manage the Duty to Refer webforms and contacts, ensuring that cases are registered and referred on accordingly.

- **Rapid Rehousing Team** – This team is designated to assist rough sleepers. It is made up of Navigators, Supported Lettings Officers and Housing First. A team of navigators assist rough sleepers by identifying suitable pathways and move-on routes. A Supported Lettings team help rough sleepers into the PRS and further support in their tenancies where required. The Housing First service supports homeless customers with multiple and complex needs who have been accepted for a Housing First service.
- **Housing Supply Team (Procurement)** – The Procurement service work with private landlords to secure properties for private rental offers to homeless households and lease properties that are used for our temporary accommodation placements Short term lets are used for the prevention and relief of homelessness using the Finder's Fee Scheme . The team use incentive payments to attract private landlords to work with the council and in return secure lower rents than on the open market.
- **Housing Supply Team (Placements)** – The Placements team manage the allocation and organisation of temporary accommodation. The team manage placements in privately rented bed and breakfasts, council owned and managed hostels, privately rented self-contained houses and other forms of properties provided by charities and other social landlords.
- **Resettlement Team** – this team supports customers who are moving into accommodation (either TA or Private Rented) by assisting with transport, fuel connections, emergency support scheme applications, furniture, settling in on the day and affordability assessments.
- **TA Support team** – Support the functions of the Housing Supply procurement and placement teams, including managing TA bill payments and possible clawbacks.
- **Housing Applications and Housing Choice** - These two teams have separate but related functions. Firstly to process household applications on the housing register, secondly to manage the allocation of social housing that households bid for from the waiting list.
- **Business Support** -General support to the Housing Solutions service by checking accommodation invoices against system records, reporting on FOIs and complaints as well as the administrative support for the service.
- **Project & Change team** - Work to develop good practice, strategy, policy and performance monitoring across the business unit. Representing and influencing on behalf of the business unit at policy and corporate level.

3.0 Resources for homeless and homelessness prevention services

3.1 Overview of Resources for Homelessness

Southwark's net spend on homelessness services comes from both the General Fund (GF) and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This pays for temporary accommodation, staff, running costs and homelessness prevention and relief measures like the Finder's Fee scheme. The overall breakdown is explained in the tables below for the years 2018/19-2022/23.

GF Temporary Accommodation (TA) Costs- TA costs from the General Fund led to an overall net cost of £12.9m in 2022/23. With the majority of this expenditure, £10.5m, in Private Sector Leased (PSLs) accommodation, this was the second year in which nightly paid accommodation was not our most expensive TA type. This also shows a drop in overall expenditure (over £1.4m less) compared with the previous year, and significantly lower than in 2020/21, this was due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the 'everyone in' initiative which allowed Local Authorities to offer TA to everyone including those who would not ordinarily be eligible for homelessness assistance.

Table 3- General Fund TA Account

General Fund TA Account actual spend	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Nightly paid - expenditure	18,479,069	18,605,565	24,645,153	15,471,092	13,992,246
Nightly paid - income	-11,716,812	-11,851,205	-10,033,362	-7,112,915	-7,735,585
Net cost	6,762,257	6,754,360	14,611,791	8,358,177	6,256,661
PSLs - expenditure	7,000,483	11,365,588	21,539,242	27,085,529	29,071,689
PSLs - income	-4,571,983	-6,386,789	-12,569,944	-16,567,940	-18,587,088
Net cost	2,428,500	4,978,799	8,969,298	10,517,589	10,484,601
TOTAL TA COST (prior to Grants)	9,190,757	11,733,159	23,581,089	18,875,766	16,741,262
Government Grants	-2,548,000	-2,874,985	-6,158,390	-4,573,879	-3,808,964
TOTAL Temporary Accommodation cost	6,642,757	8,858,174	17,422,699	14,301,887	12,932,298

Source: Internal records

GF Homelessness Measures- This account provides funding for the running costs of homelessness services (and other non-accommodation costs). In 2022/23, funding for staffing came to £7m, running costs were near £3.4m and the Finder's Fee scheme spending was £1m. The council received other income of £1.2m and Government grants of £6.2m (for staffing, preventative measures and rough sleeping), leaving the total spent from this account on homelessness services around £4m.

Table 4- Homelessness GF Account

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
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Staffing	4,404,971	4,175,500	4,958,813	6,786,620	7,002,246
Running costs	630,114	1,073,429	1,488,871	2,677,251	3,462,692
Incentives - Finders Fee scheme	585,737	708,111	1,678,785	1,164,233	1,052,445
Govt. grant	-1,340,483	- 2,292,347	-3,527,265	-5,591,854	-6,210,361
Other Income	-495,231	-546,722	-596,239	-1,330,756	-1,271,907
Net spend	3,785,108	3,117,971	4,002,965	3,705,494	4,035,115

Source: Internal records

In this instance, the Government Grants for 2022/23 included the following:

- Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG): £2,002,777
- Accommodation for Ex-Offenders (AFEO): £190,841
- Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI): £2,456,320
- Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP): £195,000
- Domestic Abuse £86,787
- Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF): £400,000
- HPG Uplift: £878,636

Table 5- HRA Homelessness TA

2022/23 HRA Account Actual Spend	
Rent	-£13,940,175
Running costs	£4,257,126
Staffing	£2,541,870
Net return	-£7,141,179

Source: Internal records

Table 6- Overall Spend on Homelessness

2022/23 Overall Actual Spend	
Temporary Accommodation - GF	12,932,298
Homelessness - GF	4,035,115
TA- HRA	-7,141,179
Total cost	£9,826,234

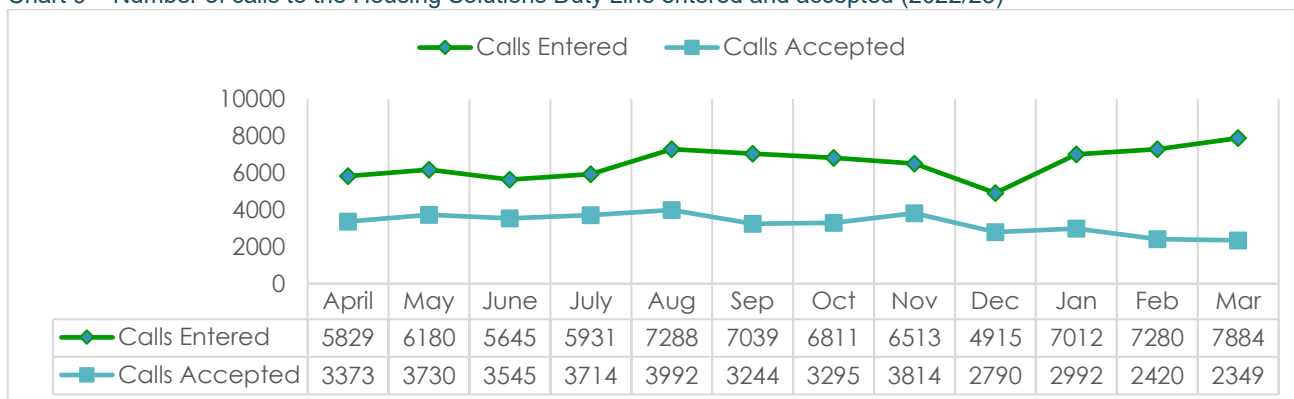
Source: Internal records

4.0 Access to making a homeless application and getting advice

Following the introduction of a lockdown in March 2020, the service was moved to remote working very quickly (see customer journey in appendix). A telephone service was set up using our 8x8 digital telephony system that allows customers to call our duty line and direct themselves to the relevant department for further assistance. The below table shows the

number of calls received in the financial year 2022/23. Calls received have steadily increased over the past financial year.

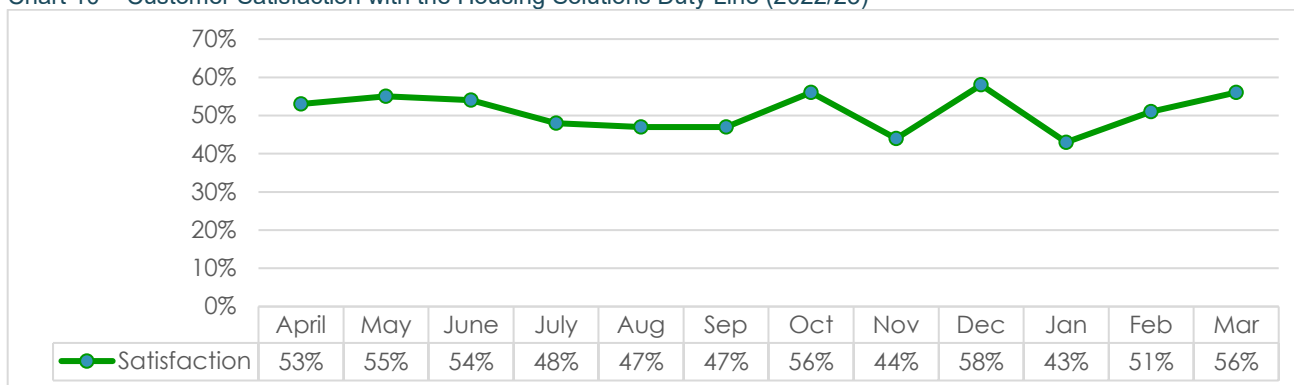
Chart 9 – Number of calls to the Housing Solutions Duty Line entered and accepted (2022/23)



Source: Internal records

Since October 2020, customers have had the opportunity to review the service received on their calls to the service. The satisfaction for the full financial year of 2022/23 is below.

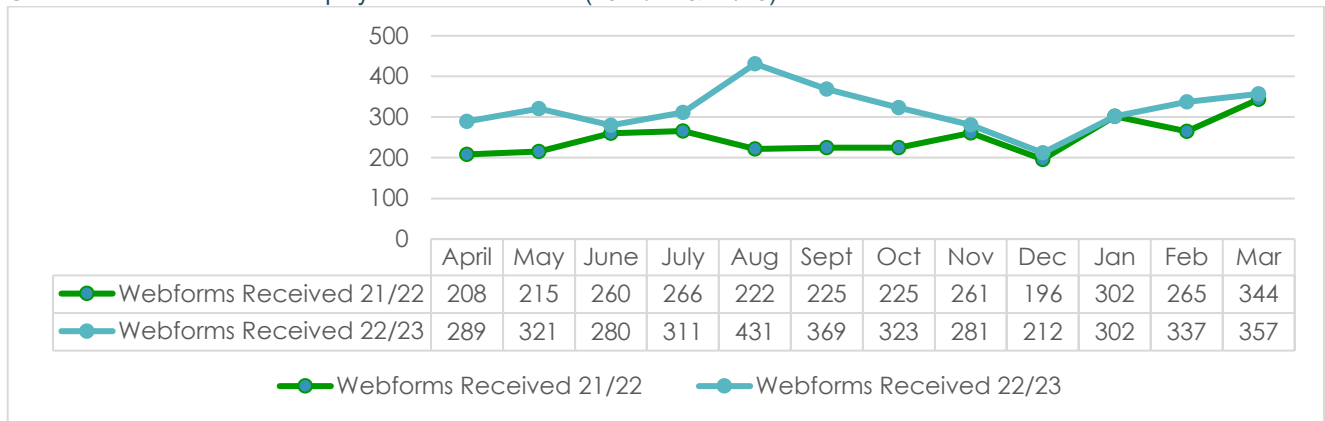
Chart 10 – Customer Satisfaction with the Housing Solutions Duty Line (2022/23)



Source: Internal records

Alternatively, customers can access homelessness assistance by completing an online webform, found on our website which contains information needed to register a household and allows an officer to follow up with them to triage for a possible homelessness assessment as needed. This was introduced along with the new advice line in March 2020, when face to face interactions were halted. The table below shows this way of accessing the Housing Solutions service has been successful and we received a relatively stable number of webforms, excluding the expected dip in numbers around the end of the calendar year. For the financial year 22/23, an average of 333 webforms per month were received from residents.

Chart 11 – Homelessness enquiry webforms received (2021/22 & 22/23)



Source: Internal records

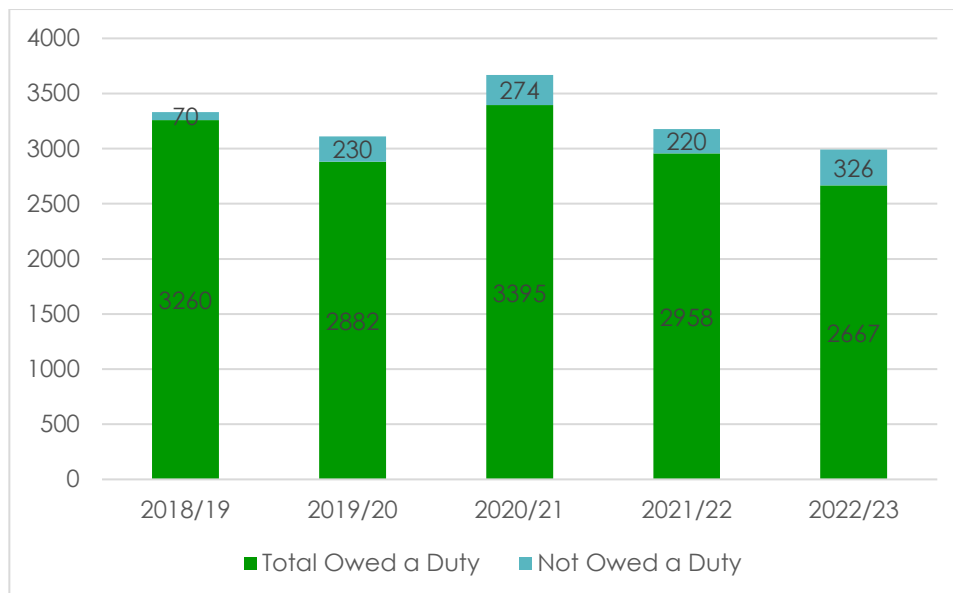
5.0 Applications owed a homeless duty

5.1 Homeless applications overview

The review of homelessness in 2017 showed that the number of homelessness applications received had increased considerably in 2016-2017. The chart below shows the number of homelessness applications owed a duty in Southwark has increased significantly since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and rose especially in 2020/21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The increase in applications is due to two important factors: the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018, which allowed the council to help residents sooner with their housing issues by broadening the reasons residents can approach for assistance; and a reduction in the number of homes that residents can afford. Affordability issues are complex but welfare reform and increasing costs of the private rented sector in the Borough have been continuing factors. These issues are explored later in the report.

Chart 12 – Number of homeless applications owed a duty in Southwark 2018/19-2022/23



Source: DLUHC Live Tables from 2018-2022 and internal reporting (subject to HCLIC validation) for 2022-2023

As the chart shows below, Southwark takes a significantly higher number of homeless applications than the average for England and London. When broken down further, inner London takes comparatively more than Greater London with Lambeth the only borough to take more applications than Southwark (3107 compared to Southwark’s 2936 in 2022/23.) This shows the strain on services in the South and South East of London and is reflective of the lack of affordable housing in the area. Another notable difference is that in 2020/21, Southwark’s homelessness applications increased when those in England and London reduced slightly. This can partly be put down to the fact that whilst Court proceedings were paused for the majority of cases for those renting by Secure or Assured Tenancies, the hidden homeless were not protected under Government initiatives to prevent homelessness during lockdown. In Southwark there are many households that suffer with overcrowding and poor quality housing. Therefore, with the nature of the virus requiring households to have space to shield and self-isolate, many were therefore at risk of homelessness due to the very nature of their housing circumstances. Also, Southwark has a large social housing stock, so whilst formal evictions were stopped, there were still friends/family exclusions to consider.

Further to this, the increase in applications can also be attributed to Southwark’s swift move to remote working and the Housing Solutions departments ability to take homelessness applications over the phone/online quickly. This allowed customers to continue to access the help they needed during the beginning of the pandemic lockdowns.

Chart 13 – Comparison between the number of homelessness applications made in Southwark with the London borough and Inner-London borough averages (2018/19 to 2022/23)



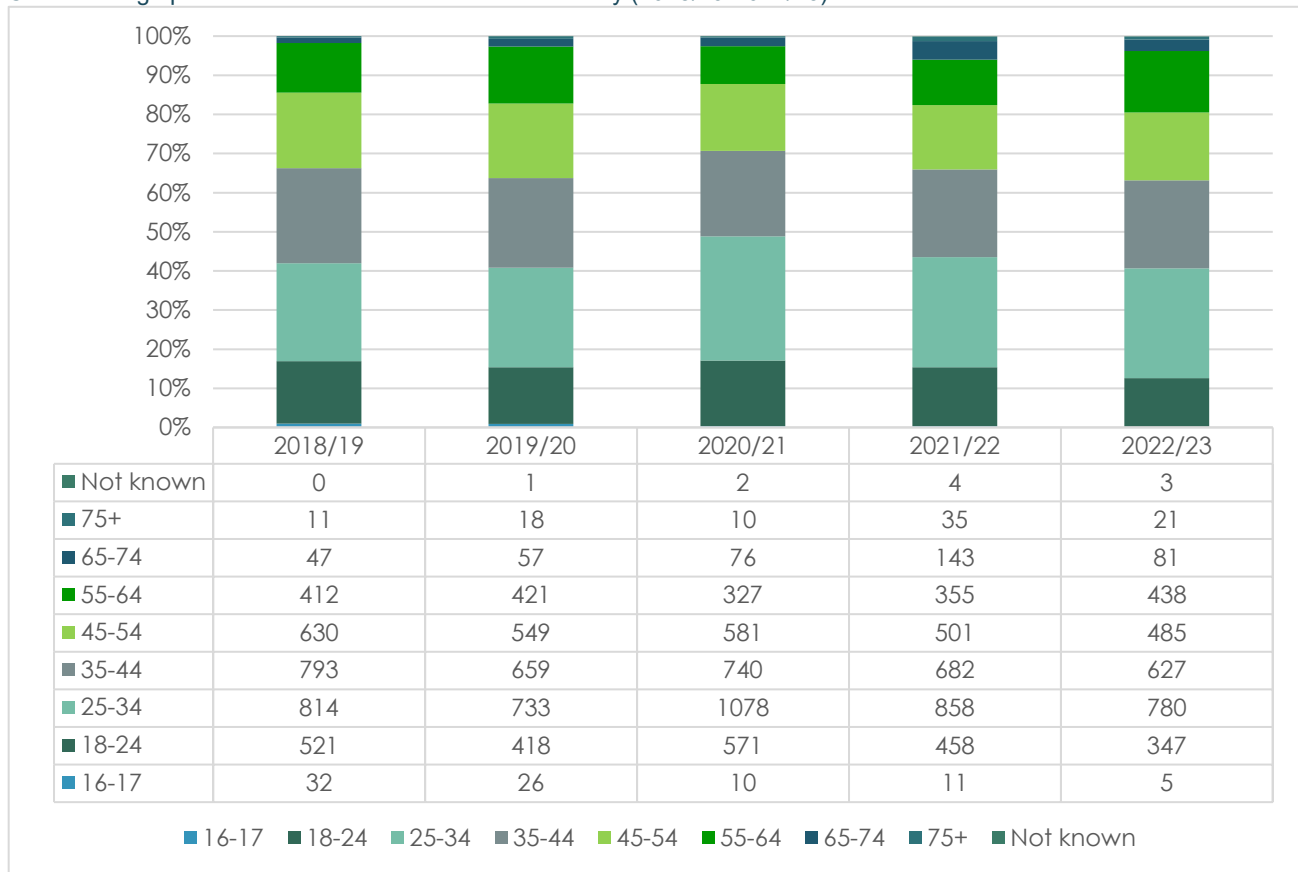
Source: DLUHC Live Tables

*Inner-London boroughs include Camden, City of London, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster

5.2 Breakdown of applicants by age, gender, household & ethnicity

The majority of main applicants accepted as owed a homeless duty are under 45 years of age (62% in 2022/23). The largest cohort of applicants were between the ages of 25-34, making up 28% of applicants in 2022/23. This represents a decrease in younger applicants on previous years. Chart 14 shows how this has changed over the past 5 years.

Chart 14 - Age profile of those owed a homelessness duty (2018/19-2022/23)

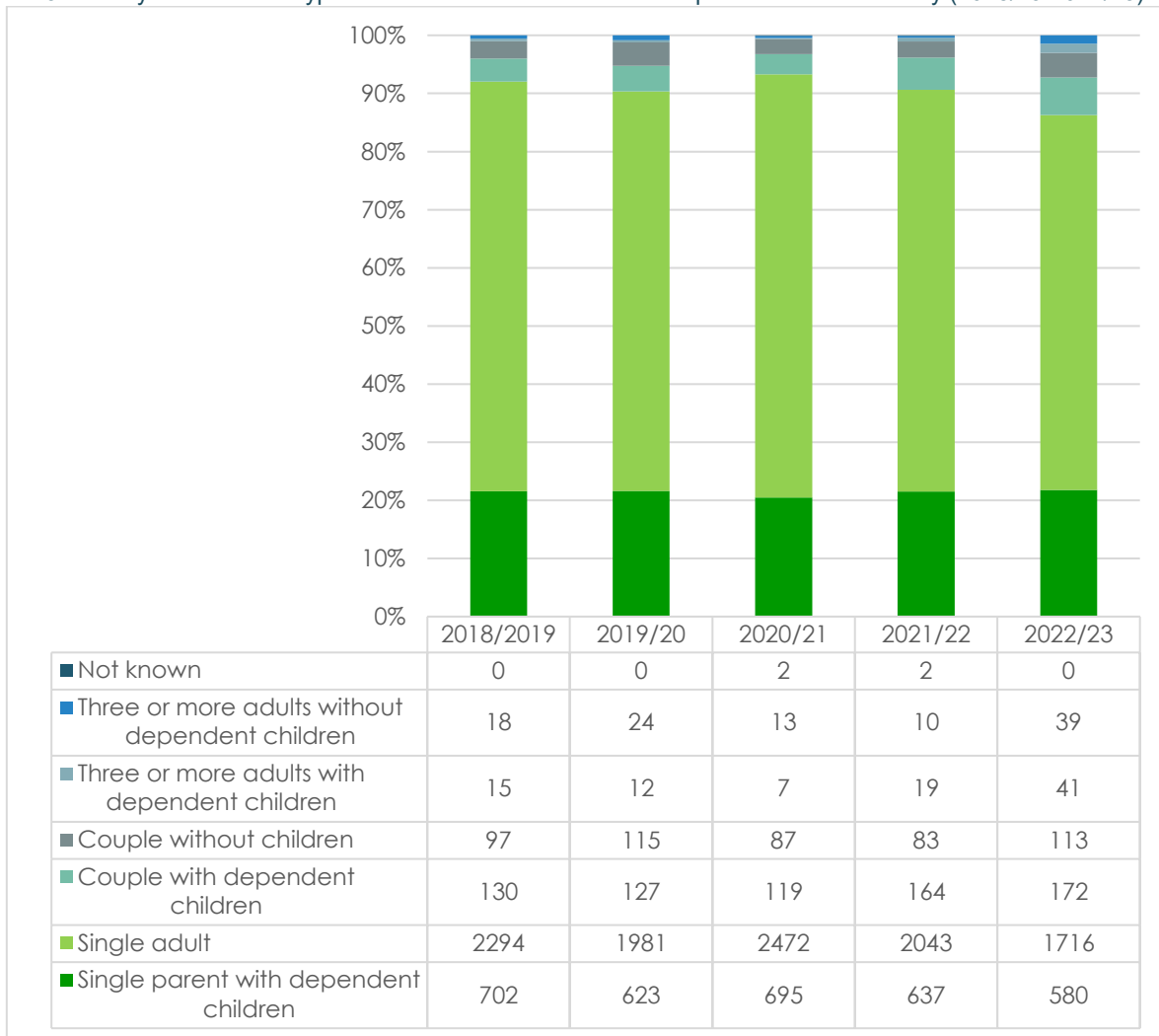


Source: DLUHC Live Tables

Family or household type owed a prevention or relief duty:

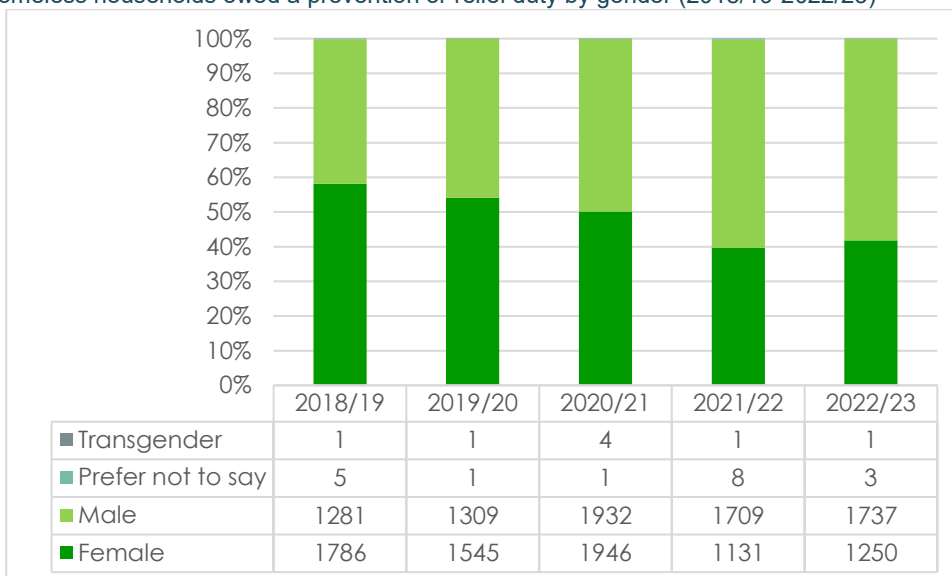
The chart below sets out the range of household types accepted as owed a homelessness duty over the last four years. Lone parent households headed by a female account for the majority of homeless main duty acceptances in Southwark. We have also seen a sharp increase in the number of single homeless applicants approaching our service since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 as access to prevention and relief options were broadened. This group now make up the largest demographic of approach cases. In 2015/16, single applicants made up 14% of applications compared to 65% of applications in 2022/23.

Chart 15 - Family or household type of homeless households owed a prevention or relief duty (2018/19-2022/23)



Source: DLUHC Live Tables from 2018-2022 and internal reporting (subject to HCLIC validation) for 2022-2023

Chart 16 – Homeless households owed a prevention or relief duty by gender (2018/19-2022/23)



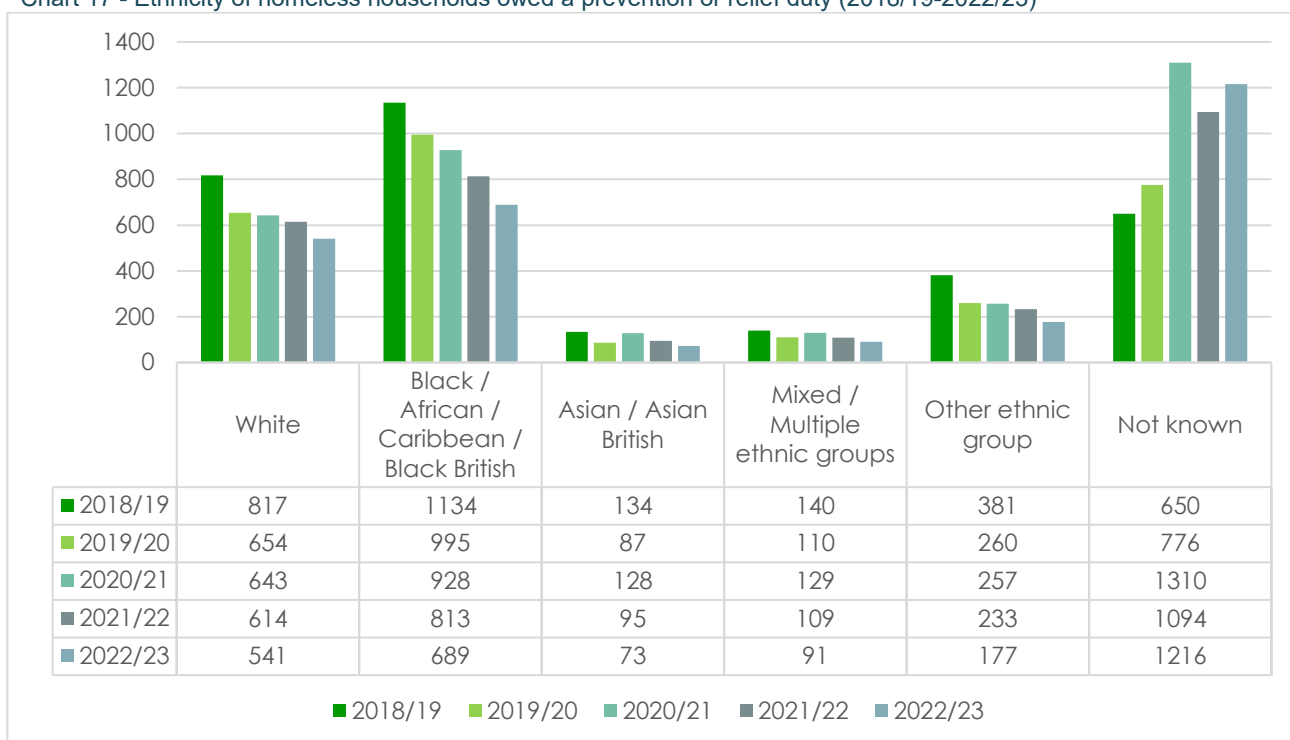
Source: Internal records

The above chart shows that 58% of main applicants are Female and 42% are male.

Ethnic origin of statutorily homeless households:

This chart looks at the ethnic origin of households approaching as homeless or threatened with homelessness. There has been an increase in the number of households that have chosen not to state their ethnic origin in their initial application, this may be reflective of remote working procedures which allowed customers to fill in a registration form themselves in which 'ethnicity' was not a mandatory question. Black/African/Caribbean/Black British make up our largest approach ethnicity other than those 'not known'.

Chart 17 - Ethnicity of homeless households owed a prevention or relief duty (2018/19-2022/23)



Source: DLUHC live tables

Southwark is a diverse borough, with 54% of residents being of white ethnicity, 25% Black, 11% Asian & 10% of other ethnicities. In 2022/23 19% of applicants were of a white ethnicity, 26% were of a black ethnicity and Asian applicants made up 3%. This shows that black homeless households are over represented in our approach figures compared to the overall makeup of ethnicity in the borough. This is a statistic reflected nationally also (although on a smaller scale), Black main applicants accounted for 10% of those owed a prevention or relief duty in England in 2022-23, but Black people make up only 4% of England's population (according to the 2021 census).

5.3 Main reasons for homelessness and threat of homelessness

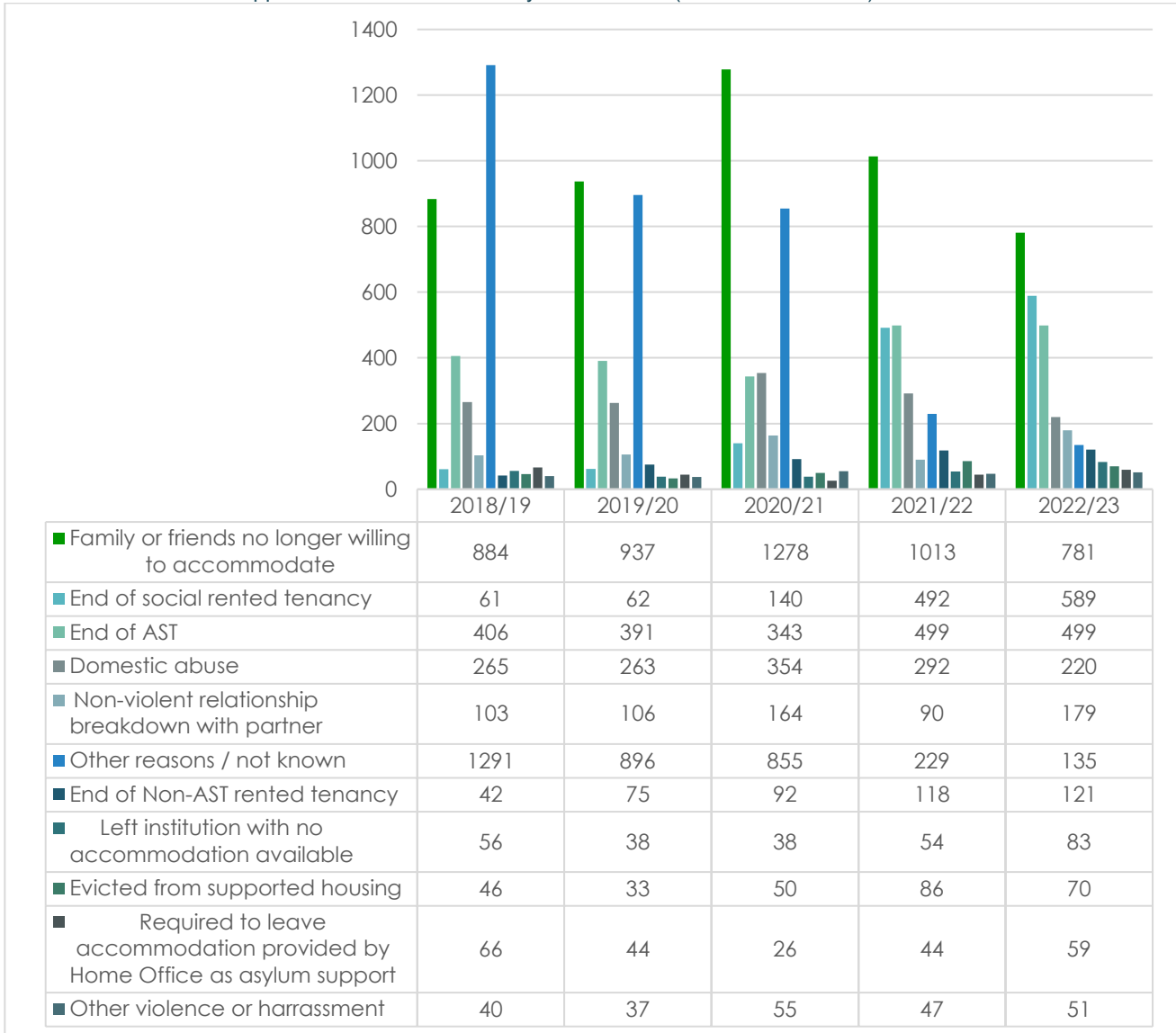
The chart below sets out the main causes of homelessness in Southwark over the last four years. The most common cause of homelessness over this time has been that parents, friends or relatives are no longer willing to accommodate the individual or household in question (28% in 2022/23). There had been a significant growth over time in the termination of assured shorthold tenancies; which accounted for 30% of homelessness in 2015/16. However, as the chart shows, this was lower in 2021/22 (17%). This is likely due to the eviction ban which was introduced during the initial lockdown for the Covid-19 pandemic. This meant landlords were required to serve longer notices and were not able to obtain court orders to formally end tenancies until this ban was lifted in June 2021. Another notable change is that approaches due to Domestic Abuse have increased significantly, these approaches made up 8% of approaches in 2022/23. It is important to note the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which introduced automatic priority need for those who have been made homeless for this reason. The increase in approaches from this cohort can also be accredited in part, to our joint working with Solace, who co-located with the Housing Solutions service from 2018 to 2022 (we now work with Refuge for this service). Our service continues to invest in training and accreditation in this subject area and has encouraged officers to become Solace Champions, meaning they have up to date training as well as refreshers to keep their knowledge relevant and fresh.

We can also see from this data that there are a number of approaches due to 'End of social rented tenancy'. This is due to HCLIC reporting categorisation and does not reflect the number of Southwark tenancies that were ended in 2021/22. This categorisation is used for any tenant who approaches with an issue with their tenancy, for example; rent arrears issues, who would be assisted with a prevention duty and helped to apply for DHP etc. This is why this figure appears to be higher than those approaching from PRS tenancies. Only 12 cases were recorded as homeless on approach from a council tenancy in 2022/23 (34 cases of the same rescored approaching from registered provider tenancies).²⁴

This data also contains a significant number of records stating the "the main reason for homelessness" as "other", this can partly be put down in the first few years due to local authorities getting to grips with the new reporting system, it can also be seen that these responses decrease over time and will continue to do so in following data years as several more answers have been added to the HCLIC responses which has meant less reason for officers to use the 'other' option when recording data.

²⁴ DLUHC Local Authority Live tables - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

Chart 18 - Reasons for approach of those owed a duty in Southwark (2018/19 to 2022/23)



Source: DLUHC Live Tables

5.4 Support needs of homeless applicants

During the process of taking a homelessness application, applicants are asked to report any support needs they or anyone in their household may have as part of the assessment. This is reported through HCLIC data and has a total of 20 possible responses. The applicant may choose as many of these responses as relevant to their application. This is also dependent on the applicants desire to disclose their support needs at the time of the assessment.

Table 7 – Number of support needs reported on approach by homeless applicants in 2022/23

Number of support needs reported in 2022/23				
	1 support need	2 support needs	3+ support needs	% of households reporting any support need (of total apps)

Southwark	658	345	441	52%
London	12750	4360	4260	37%

Source: DLUHC Live Tables

We can see from the above table that homeless households in Southwark are more likely to have a support need to report than the London average. Notably, Southwark applicants report higher levels of physical ill health and disability than England as a whole as well as higher levels of repeat homelessness. Conversely, Southwark has lower levels of drug and alcohol dependency than the London and England averages.

The below table shows the reported support needs of applicants in 2022/23, this data shows 64% of homeless applicants had one or more reported support need. When breaking these down, the most commonly reported support need was 'physical ill health and disability' followed by a 'history of mental health problems', & 'at risk of/has experienced domestic abuse'. This largely followed national trends as seen in the tables below.

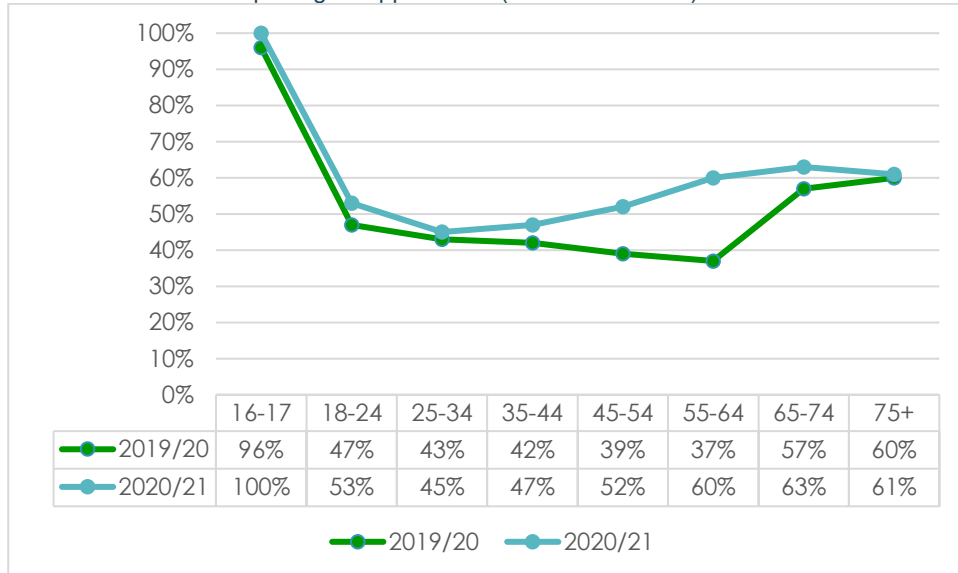
Table 8 – Breakdown of support needs reported in 2022/23 compared to the England and London average

Support need	Southwark	England	London
Physical ill health and disability	23%	16%	20%
History of mental health problems	21%	23%	21%
At risk of / has experienced domestic abuse	9%	10%	11%
History of repeat homelessness	7%	6%	4%
History of rough sleeping	7%	5%	4%
Offending history	6%	7%	6%
Learning disability	6%	5%	4%
At risk of / has experienced abuse (non-domestic abuse)	4%	3%	3%
At risk of/ has experienced sexual abuse / exploitation	4%	2%	2%
Drug dependency needs	3%	5%	4%
Alcohol dependency needs	2%	4%	3%
Access to education, employment or training	2%	4%	5%
Former asylum seeker	2%	1%	2%
Young person aged 18-25 years requiring support to manage independently	2%	3%	4%
Care leaver aged 21+ years	1%	1%	1%
Old age	1%	1%	2%
Young parent requiring support to manage independently	<1%	<1%	1%

Young person aged 16-17 years	<1%	<1%	<1%
Care leaver aged 18-20 years	<1%	1%	1%
Served in HM Forces	<1%	<1%	<1%

Source: DLUHC Live Tables

Chart 19 – Age breakdown of those reporting a support need (2019/20-2020/21)

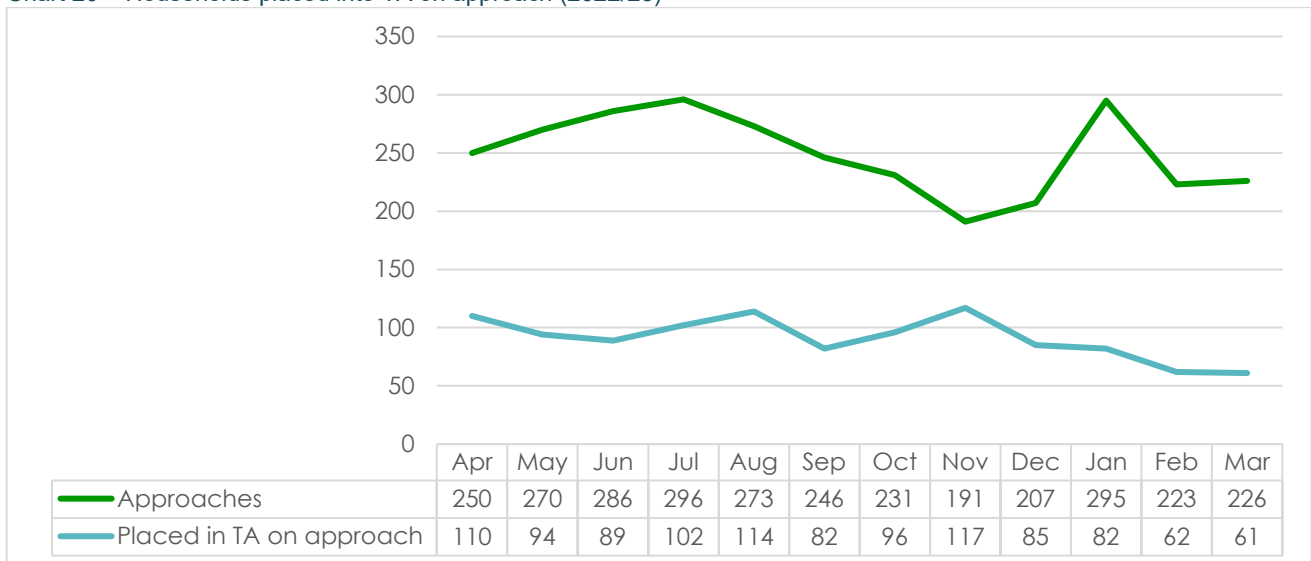


Source: Internal records

5.5 Breakdown of those placed in Temporary Accommodation (TA) on approach (April 2022-March 2023)

The following chart shows the number of homeless applicants in 2022/23 and if they were placed in temporary accommodation (TA).

Chart 20 – Households placed into TA on approach (2022/23)



Source: Internal data

On average, the number of households that have been provided with TA on approach was 37%. This puts significant strain on the Council’s financial resources. In previous years Southwark would have been able to help many of these households to avoid homelessness by using the Borough’s private rented sector, however, locally the private sector has become increasingly unaffordable for households on low incomes. Average rents in the Borough have grown considerably whilst Local Housing Allowance has remained low in comparison. Finding affordable nightly paid temporary accommodation for homeless households in the Borough has also become difficult.

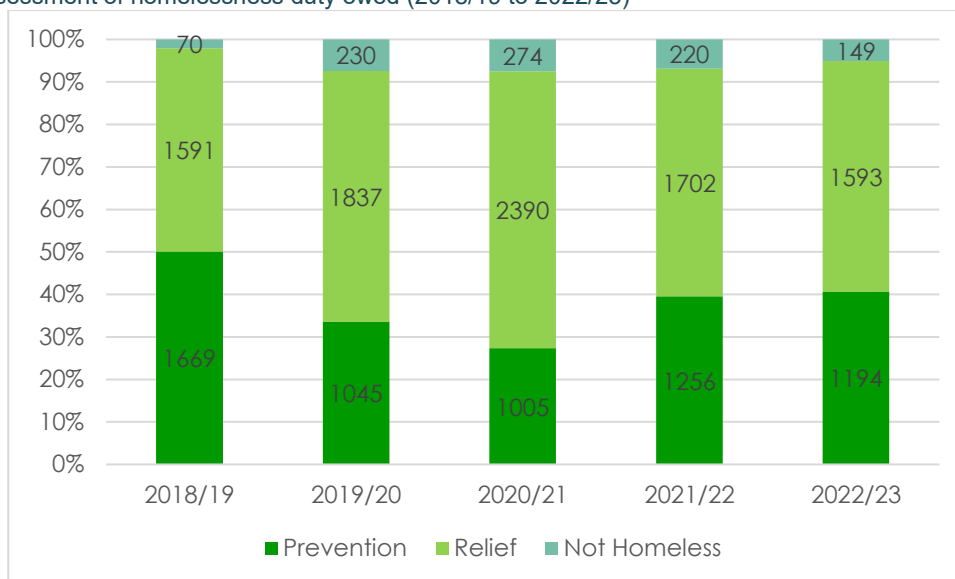
6.0 Homeless prevention and relief

6.1 Overview of homeless prevention and relief in Southwark

The obligation for local authorities to prevent as well as respond to homelessness is longstanding in law and in good practice. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 created two new duties for local authorities to assist homeless households. These are the Prevention and Relief duties which expanded the statutory provision for assistance.

This legislation extended entitlement to help to more households and placed focus on the prevention of homelessness by encouraging early intervention. This meant that households that are likely to become homeless in the next 56 days can approach their local authority for homelessness assistance (this was previously 28 days). Local authorities will then have another 56 days to attempt to relieve the household’s homelessness should prevention fail. The Act requires public bodies to work together and be able to demonstrate that they have considered every option to prevent each case of homelessness. The table below shows the breakdown of the assessment of duty owed to homeless applicants in Southwark from 2018/19-2022/23.

Chart 21 – Assessment of homelessness duty owed (2018/19 to 2022/23)



Source: DLUHC Live Tables

6.2 Homeless prevention data

If a client is threatened with homelessness, they will be recorded via HCLIC into two categories within the data specification. The first being a 'prevention duty owed', an example of which would be an applicant whose family wish to exclude them but can keep them for a period of time while alternative accommodation may be sourced. The second prevention duty category is 'prevention duty owed due to being served a valid section 21'. The table below shows the breakdown of these two recording options.

It can be seen that those recorded as presenting with a valid section 21 made up 4% of applications. Comparatively, in London, these made up 7% of applications. It is important to note that of all applications owed a prevention duty in Southwark, 28% were from a private rented accommodation. Therefore more are likely to be threatened with homelessness from a landlord but have not been issued with a valid notice and so have not been recorded as such.

Table 9, Breakdown of prevention duty owed in Southwark (2018/19-2022/23)

Duty breakdown	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Owed a Prevention Duty	1,669	1,045	1,005	1257	1194
Of which: Prevention Duty due to the service of a valid s.21	161	122	90	65	105

Source: DLUHC Live Tables

6.3 Positive outcomes of prevention and relief duties

The following charts show the outcomes of the prevention and relief duties. Applicants whose prevention duty ended due to becoming 'homeless' were then moved into a relief duty. The outcomes considered as a positive prevention/relief are 'secured accommodation for 6 months +'. All other outcomes would mean disengagement or failure to prevent or relieve homelessness within the statutory 56 days of the respective duties.

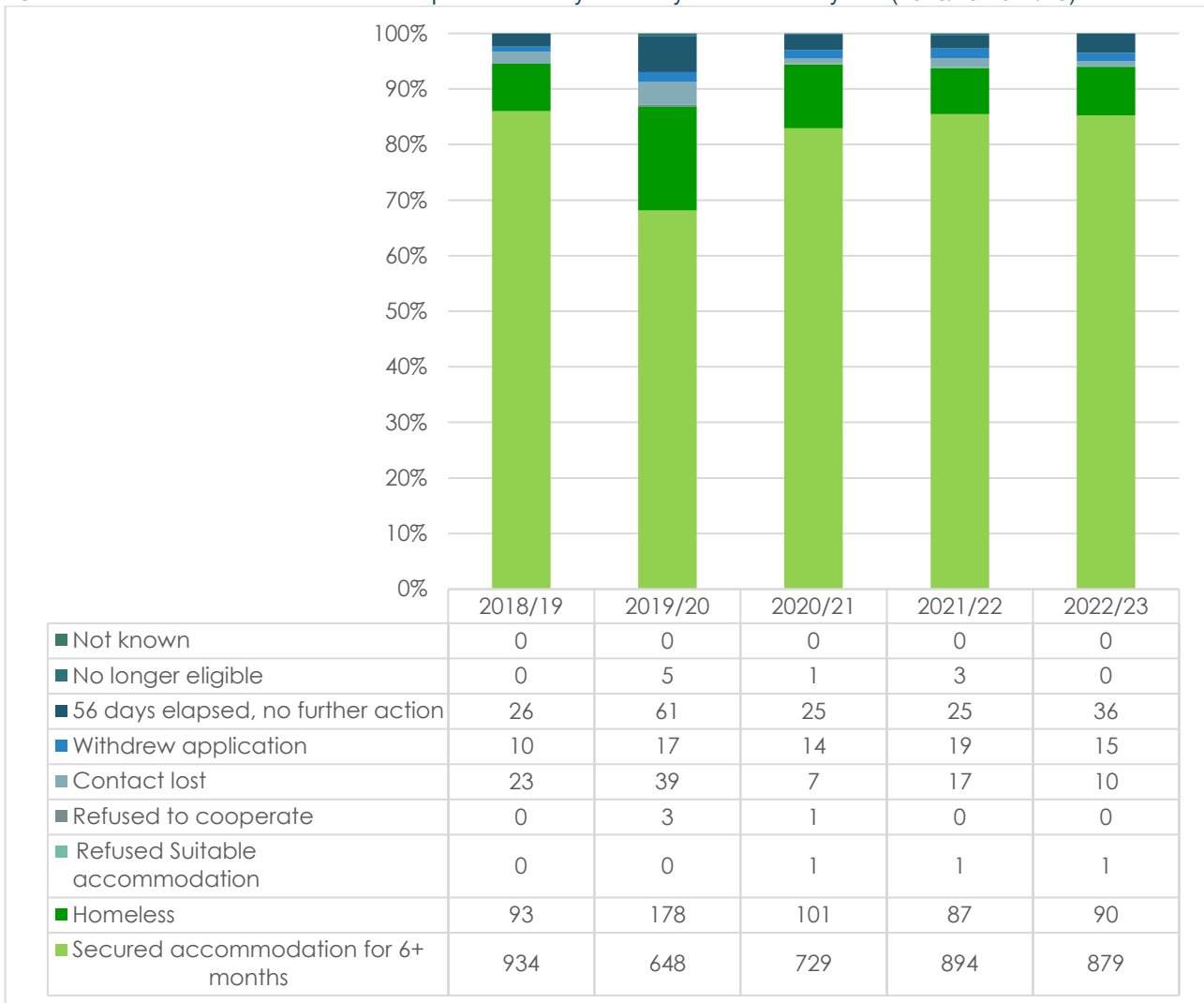
The charts and table below show that Southwark's ability to prevent homelessness has remained relatively stable with a dip in 2019/20 but back up to 85% in 2021/22 & 2022/23. We have also seen an overall increase in the number of positive relief outcomes recorded.

Table 10, Percentage of Positive Prevention and Relief outcomes recorded

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
% Positive prevention outcome	86%	68%	83%	85%	85%
% Positive relief outcome	16%	18%	27%	21%	19%

Source: DLUHC Live Tables

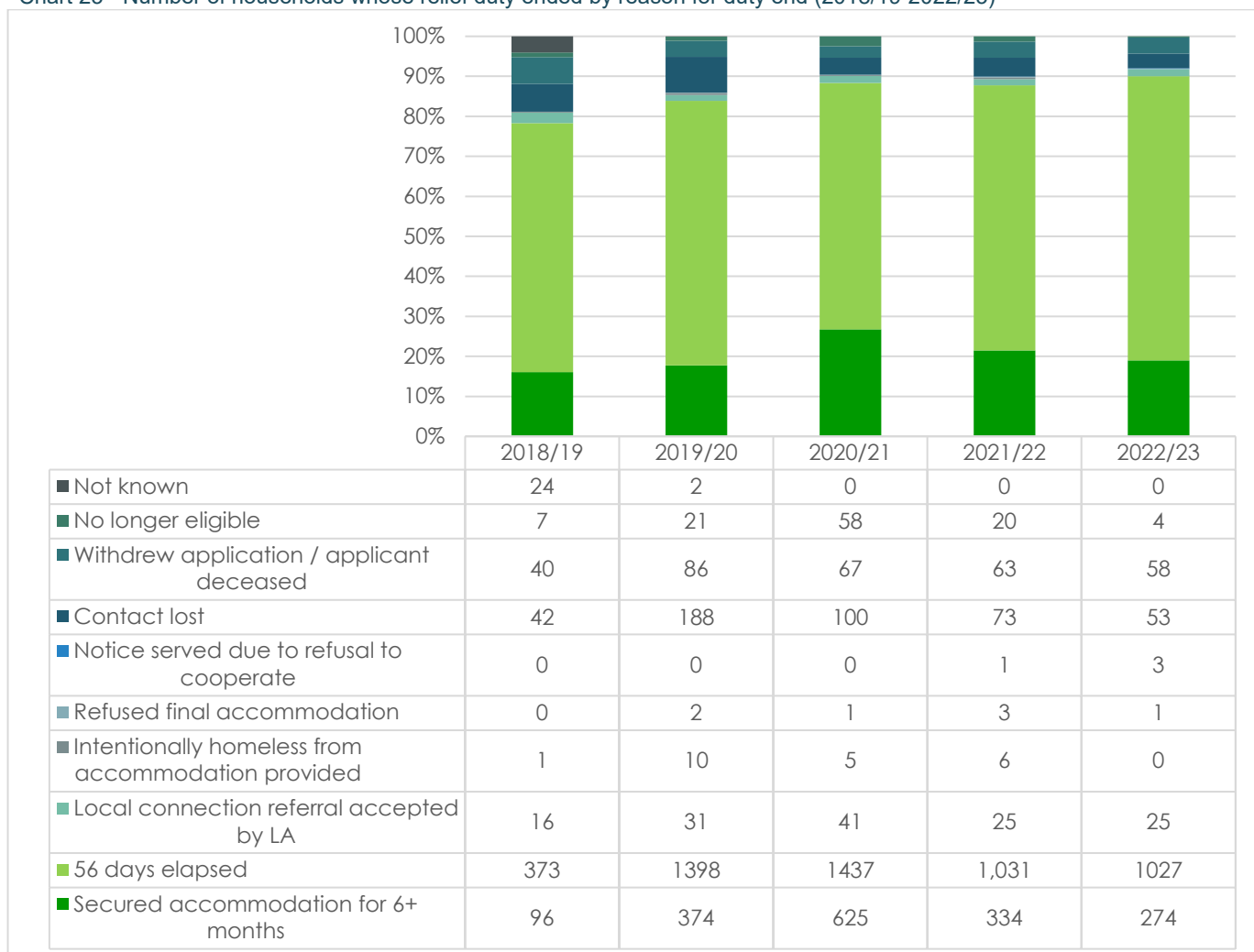
Chart 22 – Number of households whose prevention duty ended by reason for duty end (2018/19-2022/23)



Source: DLUHC Live Tables

Chart 22 shows that 879 customers were assisted to prevent their homelessness in 22/23. This may have included; securing PRS properties, negotiating renewals on existing tenancies, advocacy to end eviction proceedings. The means of preventing and relieving homelessness is explored later in this report.

Chart 23 - Number of households whose relief duty ended by reason for duty end (2018/19-2022/23)



Source: DLUHC Live Tables

The following table sets out the local authorities with the highest level of homeless preventions and reliefs in 2022/23. Southwark ranked 5th nationally in preventions and 63rd in relief. Southwark has improved on its placements nationally, rising from 19th in preventions & 140th in relief for the year 2018/19.

Table 11 – Top 20 Local Authorities by positive homeless preventions in England (2022/23)

2022/23	Number of positive prevention outcomes
Leeds	2441
Bradford	1123
Ealing	1021
Lambeth	940
Southwark	879
Leicester	815
Stockton-on-Tees	814
Kingston upon Hull	810
Cornwall	779
Cheshire East	754

Haringey	736
Newcastle on Tyne	682
Wakefield	655
Derby	650
Kirklees	650
Southampton	621
Greenwich	617
Buckinghamshire	611
Medway Towns	606
Stockport	563

Source: DLUHC Live Tables

Table 12 – Top 20 Local Authorities by positive reliefs in England (2022/23)

2022/23	Number of positive relief outcomes
Leeds	1065
Sheffield	931
Liverpool	732
Cornwall	706
Coventry	657
Stoke-on-Trent	651
Durham	632
Plymouth	630
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	628
Ealing	621
Wirral	594
Bradford	588
Leicester	575
Newcastle on Tyne	552
Bristol	547
Hillingdon	544
Barnet	540
Doncaster	528
Rotherham	509
Kingston upon Hull	490
63rd - Southwark	274

Source: DLUHC Live Tables

6.4 Services and options available to prevent and relieve homelessness

The below shows the breakdown of actions taken by our prevention and relief teams in Southwark. These teams/initiatives assist customers during both duties of the homelessness application and will often work in conjunction each other to work to positively close a case.

Prevention and Relief Teams work directly with customers to support them in their own search for a new property. Customers are offered access to our Self Help Scheme as part of the reasonable steps in their PHP along with being referred to supported accommodation. Alongside these options, officers will work to advocate for the customer to try and sustain their approach address accommodation where possible.

- *The Self Help Scheme* – offers a landlord a deposit and incentive payment on the tenant’s behalf. These properties are sourced by the applicant themselves and information about the scheme is provided to them to present to potential agents and landlords when searching for a property. This scheme can also be used to sustain current tenancies where the landlord may be looking to re-let the property at a higher rent or to resolve small rent arrears issues.

Table 13, Self Help Scheme payments made 2018/19-2022/23

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Self Help Scheme’s processed	38	69	463	233	167

Source: Internal data

- *The supported accommodation pathway* – caseworkers can assess customers on their ability to sustain accommodation independently. If they are not able to, they can be referred to supported accommodation providers.

Table 14, Supported accommodation placements 2018/19-2022/23

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Supported Accommodation placements	5	15	14	15	35

Source: DLUHC Live Tables

Housing Supply Team (Procurement) work with private landlords to secure rental properties for homeless applicants. By offering incentives and insurance packages, landlords are brought on board to offer properties at rents in line with the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) for a minimum of 12 months (Assured Shorthold Tenancy). This team will process payments through the following schemes:

- *The Finder’s Fee scheme* – offers a landlord a one off payment in return for a rental property offered at LHA rate on the condition that no rental deposit or rent in advance is required from prospective tenants. These properties are sourced by the team directly and viewings are offered out to suitable homeless applicants.
 - Successful Finder’s fee Lets:
 - 2018/19 : 154
 - 2019/20 : 225
 - 2020/21 : 320
 - 2021/22 : 158
 - 2022/23: 79
- *Private Rented Sector Offers* – This is a new initiative being introduced this year. These offers are made to customers within their prevention and relief duty but also to those who are accepted homeless cases owed a main duty. A procurement

officer will complete an affordability/suitability assessment to match a client to the property. After this a first formal offer is made.

- If client accepts; set up tenancy with landlord and close the case.
- If client refuses; complete second formal offer
- If client refuses the 2nd offer; the caseworker will issue an end of duty notification letter which will result in any temporary accommodation bookings being ended and the case will be closed.

The Private Rented Sector team works with private tenants to sustain tenancies and resolve private tenancy issues. Examples of these scenarios may include:

- Where a landlord is asking a tenant to leave, or has given them notice;
- Where a tenant is having problems getting their deposit back or in getting repairs carried out;
- Where a landlord is trying to increase the rent charge.

The team will take a homeless application from a private tenant at risk of homelessness and issue a personal housing plan (PHP) detailing the options available to the applicant. The team negotiate with landlords to help prevent eviction proceedings where a valid notice to quit has been served. They also ensure due legal process is followed by checking all notices and court papers received by applicants. They work closely with the Financial Inclusion Team to help broker agreements to help tenants remain in their homes (through DHP and rent arrears fund payments for landlords) and provide in-depth support for customers who approach at risk of homelessness. Further to this, they will also offer access to the Self Help Scheme. Alongside offering advice on private tenancies, the team works closely with the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Team to try and improve standards in the sector.

The following table shows the number of cases where the team has been successful at preventing and relieving homelessness for at least six months. Positive outcomes are also given to cases where there has been a ceasing of eviction proceedings through intervention and advice and/or the provision of support to enable a client the time to make their own alternative accommodation arrangements. These outcomes form part of the positive prevention and relief duty outcomes seen in section 6.3.

Table 15- Private Tenancies Team homelessness preventions and reliefs, 2018/19-2022/23

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
BVPI*	224	169	83	0	0
Positive prevention/ relief cases	N/A	21	149	250	161
Total positive outcomes	224	190	232	250	161

Source: DLUHC Live Tables & internal reports

*The team only began taking part VII appointments in 2019/20 so data for the financial year 2018/19 is recorded as a positive 'BVPI' outcome which is an internal reporting system outcome. This reporting was phased out in 2020/21.

The Financial Inclusion team provide assistance to all tenants who are at risk of losing their home or who may simply be worried about their current housing situation. The team manage two main funds:

Rent arrears fund:	Providing a maximum payment of £500 to assist private tenants with a shortfall in their rent on the understanding that the landlord will not seek to evict the tenant for at least six months
Discretionary Housing Payment fund:	Managing delivery of Southwark’s discretionary housing payments (DHP) scheme. The team administer DHP applications from housing benefit & Universal Credit recipients who are struggling with their housing costs.

Table 16 - Discretionary housing payment (DHP) funding- last four years

(2018/19)	(2019/20)	(2020/21)	(2021/22)	(2022/23)
£1,289,778	£1,223,346	£1,393,779	£1,153,647	£1,097,657

Source: Internal records

Demand for DHP payments increases every year and Southwark is always able to spend its whole allocation. Residents apply for assistance from the DHP fund when there is a shortfall between their income and their rent. This can be down to a number of reasons, for example, the benefit cap, which reduces the monthly benefit entitlement of households who are not working. The number of successful applications are listed below along with the average award per case. The average award increased by 29% from 2021/22 to 2022/23.

Table 17 - Breakdown of Southwark DHP awards by year (2018/19-2022/23)

Year	Number of successful applications	Total of DHP allocated	Average DHP award per case
2018/19	837	£1,289,778.41	£839.66
2019/20	785	£1,223,356.04	£723.45
2020/21	1128	£1,393,779.74	£976.04
2021/22	847	£1,153,647.00	£1057.12
2022/23	890	£1,097,657	£1366.32

Source: Internal records

In 2022/23, funding was provided to 891 residents experiencing a shortfall in income. The outcomes recorded for this intervention is listed below:

Table 18, Outcomes of successful DHP applications in 2022/23

2021/22	Count of Total
Adapted accomm.	3
Exceptional Circ's	63
Rent Deposit	3
Short term help until Change of Circumstances	816
Short-term help before move	6

Grand Total	847
-------------	-----

Source: Internal Records

Table 19 - Breakdown of Southwark DHP awards by tenure (2022/23)

Tenancy Type	Number of cases
Southwark council tenancy	280
Housing associations	227
Private rented sector	223
Southwark council temporary accommodation	161
Total	891

Source: Internal Records

Table 20 – Reason for refused DHP applications in Southwark (2022/23)

Refusal Reason	Number of cases
Claim not for a reason covered by DHP	202
Rent covered in full by Housing Benefit /Universal Credit	137
Housing Benefit/Universal Credit assessment outstanding or suspended	65
No Housing Benefit /Universal Credit in payment	67
Household has disposable income	57
Further information required	543
Other	127
Total	1198

Source: Internal Records

Table 21 - Breakdown of Southwark Rent Arrears fund awards by year (2018/19-2022/23)

Rent arrears fund data 2018/19-2022/23	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Number of applications per year	55	70	237	327	395
Number of successful applications	45	44	93	241	184
Average award given per year	£2,800	£3,355	£5,833	£3,225	£2666
Total awards given per year	£33,342	£40,265	£69,996	£698,429.45	£490,658.39

Source: Internal Records

In January 2022 and mid-2021, Southwark was awarded funds from the Homelessness Prevention Grant Uplift and was able to put a significant amount towards the Rent Arrears fund. As seen above the total award given in these years was significantly higher for this reason.

In summary, in 2022/23 Southwark Council prevented or relieved homelessness through:

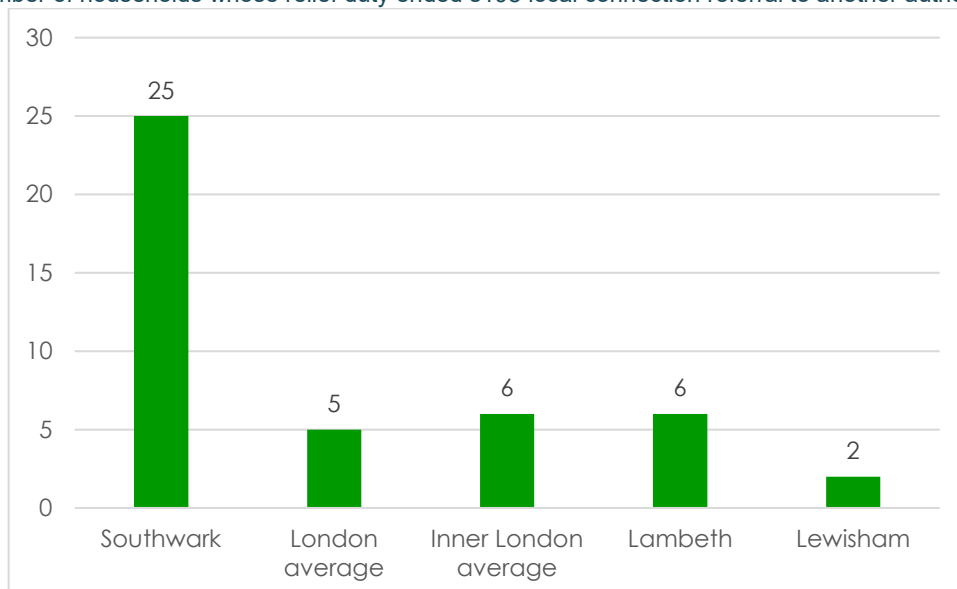
- Securing new accommodation using the Finder's Fee & Self Help Scheme
- Sustaining tenancies through securing a new AST's using the Self Help Scheme
- Supported accommodation provision
- Negotiation or legal advocacy to ensure that someone can remain in accommodation in the private rented sector
- Financial assistance to sustain tenancies

6.5 Households whose Relief duty ended due to no local connection

If a household has no local connection to their borough of approach, they can be referred to the area they have a local connection through a s198 referral.

Although total numbers of referrals are low, Southwark made more local connection referrals than the inner London and London averages.

Chart 24 - Number of households whose relief duty ended s198 local connection referral to another authority (2022/23)



7.0 Work with partners to prevent and relieve homelessness in Southwark

This section provides an overview of the protocols, services, activities and resources that contribute to homelessness service provision in Southwark. All of the following activity contributes to Southwark's overall homeless prevention performance that is reported to *The Department of Communities & Local Government (DLUHC)* on a quarterly basis through HCLIC reports.

7.1 Southwark Homelessness Forum

Southwark Council coordinates a quarterly meeting bringing together voluntary sector organisations, community groups, and statutory agencies concerned with preventing

homelessness and supporting people who have become homeless. The forum is a chance to share information and receive feedback on topics and developments that relate to homelessness with an aim to help deliver on the commitments in the Southwark Homelessness strategy.

These meetings are open to all voluntary sector and community representatives, and representatives of statutory bodies with an interest in homelessness. The forum is chaired by Southwark Law Centre’s Executive Director and plays an important role in helping to develop Southwark’s Homelessness Strategy.

7.2 Southwark Homelessness Roundtable

A quarterly meeting chaired by the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for New Homes and Sustainable Development attended by executives and heads of services from around the borough. The sessions aim to provide a platform for council and external agencies to share information and highlight any areas of best practice or areas which can be improved upon. This has been running since 2021 and each session focuses upon a specific discussion impacting homelessness.

7.3 Joint working protocols to prevent homelessness

Several protocols have been established between the council and key partners to minimise homelessness and improve coordination across services and increase homelessness prevention, a summary of which is provided below:

Protocol	Description
Hospital discharge protocol:	<p>This procedure established a referral system with local health and social care agencies to minimise homelessness and improve the quality of life for homeless patients when discharged from hospital. The referral systems minimises the number of patients being discharged from hospital and advised to approach the housing solutions service as homeless or social care agencies for assistance and support.</p> <p>The protocol is currently in place across Guy’s and St Thomas’ hospital, King’s College hospital and the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLAM). Referrals can be made by hospital pathway homelessness discharge teams at any time of day prior to the patient leaving hospital. The referral is addressed by the housing solutions service within 3 working days, and a housing assessment is conducted to identify how best to support the patient once they are discharged.</p>
Housing and Southwark advocacy & support service (SASS) protocol:	<p>This procedure outlines how the Southwark Advocacy and Support Service (SASS) and Southwark’s housing department cooperate to ensure that tenants who experience domestic abuse are dealt with swiftly and professionally in order to reduce any further distress:</p>

	<p>Once a council tenant's resident services officer (RSO) is aware that the tenant is experiencing domestic abuse they will conduct a risk assessment. A SASS worker will provide their own risk assessment and a letter detailing the service user's situation / history of abuse. When all of the evidence has been collated the RSO will consider the risks and the options available to the tenant, which may include a referral to the sanctuary scheme, or if it is deemed that the resident should be moved for safety reasons, the RSO will refer to the council's social welfare panel (SWP). If the case is accepted by the SWP but the tenant needs to move out of their current property before they have successfully bid for a new property, SASS will try to secure a refuge, which will not affect the status of their application. Council tenants will always be advised not to give up their tenancy.</p> <p>Non-council tenants that require housing assistance will be referred to the housing solutions service, and if the client no longer has a roof over their head, a homeless application will be made. However if they still have accommodation they will receive advice and assistance, and a homeless application will be made at a later time. SASS liaise with the housing solutions team on the day that the tenant attends an appointment to help minimise the risk of any further distress.</p>
<p>Duty to refer for professionals in public services:</p>	<p>The Duty to Refer (DTR) was introduced in 2017 with the Homelessness Reduction Act. This placed a duty on specified public authorities to refer service users who they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to local authority homelessness teams. This aims to improve partnership working and increase homelessness prevention.</p> <p>Southwark has an online DTR web form which is ordinarily responded to within 24 hours or receipt. This web form gathers initial information on the case and enables the Gateway team to register and contact the applicant to triage them and book them in for a homelessness assessment as necessary.</p>

7.4 Partnership working to prevent homelessness

Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017, Southwark has championed partnership working to try and create a holistic approach to tackling homelessness. The Housing Solutions department have introduced several service level agreements with external partners to meet this aim. The below commentary explains some of these key partnerships.

- **Beam:** Beam offer help with employment and training for unemployed homeless applicants. Crowdfunding is used to finance an applicant's chosen training as well as helping with securing private rented accommodation to help with move on from temporary accommodation.
 - For 2022/23 Beam assisted with:
 - Residents joined Beam: 42

- Started paid work: 19
 - Successful homelessness preventions : 9
 - Donations for Southwark residents: £ 57694.44
- **Refuge:** Those who approach Southwark's housing options service can be referred to our commissioned partner organisation Refuge. We work directly with Refuge who offer service users are offered specialised support by a Refuge IDVA for risk management, safety planning and advice on appropriate housing options. This service can be offered either in person in Refuge or Southwark venues, or via telephone depending on service user preference or need. Upon completion of a risk assessment, the Refuge IDVA will inform our assessment service of the level of risk to ensure the appropriate interim accommodation steps are taken whilst steps are taken to relieve the service user's homelessness in the longer term.
 - *Prior to working with Refuge, we were working in house at Bournemouth Road and remotely since March 2020 with Solace Women's Aid.*

8.0 Main duty outcomes and acceptances of homeless households

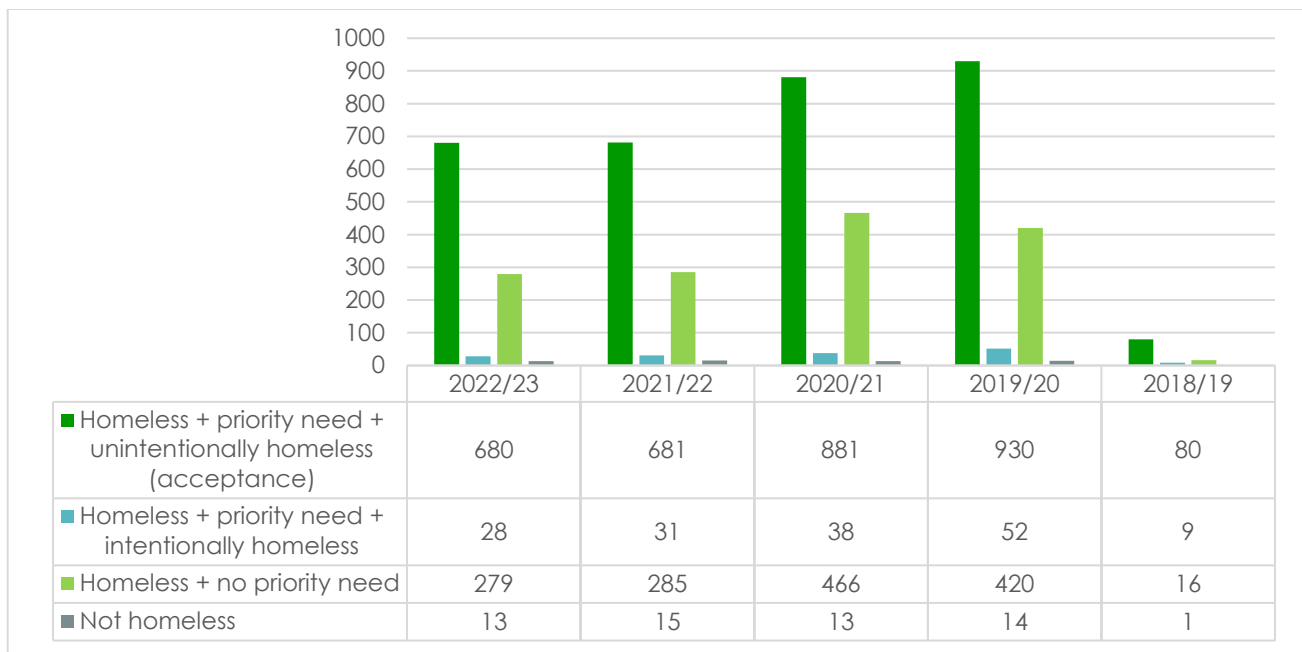
The following data relates to cases who were given a section 184 decision on their case. The possible outcomes for these decision are the following:

- Homeless + priority need* + unintentionally homeless (a 'main duty'* accept decision; Section 193 (2))
- Homeless + priority need + intentionally homeless*
- Homeless + no priority need*
- Not homeless*

*These terms are explained at the beginning of this report

It should again be noted that the data from 2018 shows is an anomaly as this was the first year of HCLIC reporting and some data was not effectively collected. This table shows that the majority of decisions made at this stage of homelessness applications were homeless, priority need & unintentionally homeless (68%). These were followed by non-priority decisions making up 28% of all 184 decisions in 2022/23.

Chart 25 – Decision on duty owed at end of relief duty (section 184 decisions) in 2021/22:



Source: DLUHC Live Table

The below table shows the Southwark acceptance rate compared to England and London. Southwark's acceptance rate is lower than the London average (79%), and it is in line with the England average of 71%. The Inner London average was 61% for the same year.

Between 2018/19 and 2022/23 there was a 7% decrease in the number of homeless applications that resulted in a main duty acceptance in Southwark. In England, there was a 13% increase and a 10% increase in London during the same time.

Table 22 – Comparison of main duty decisions for eligible households, main duty acceptances and acceptance rates across England, London and Southwark (2018/19-2022/23)

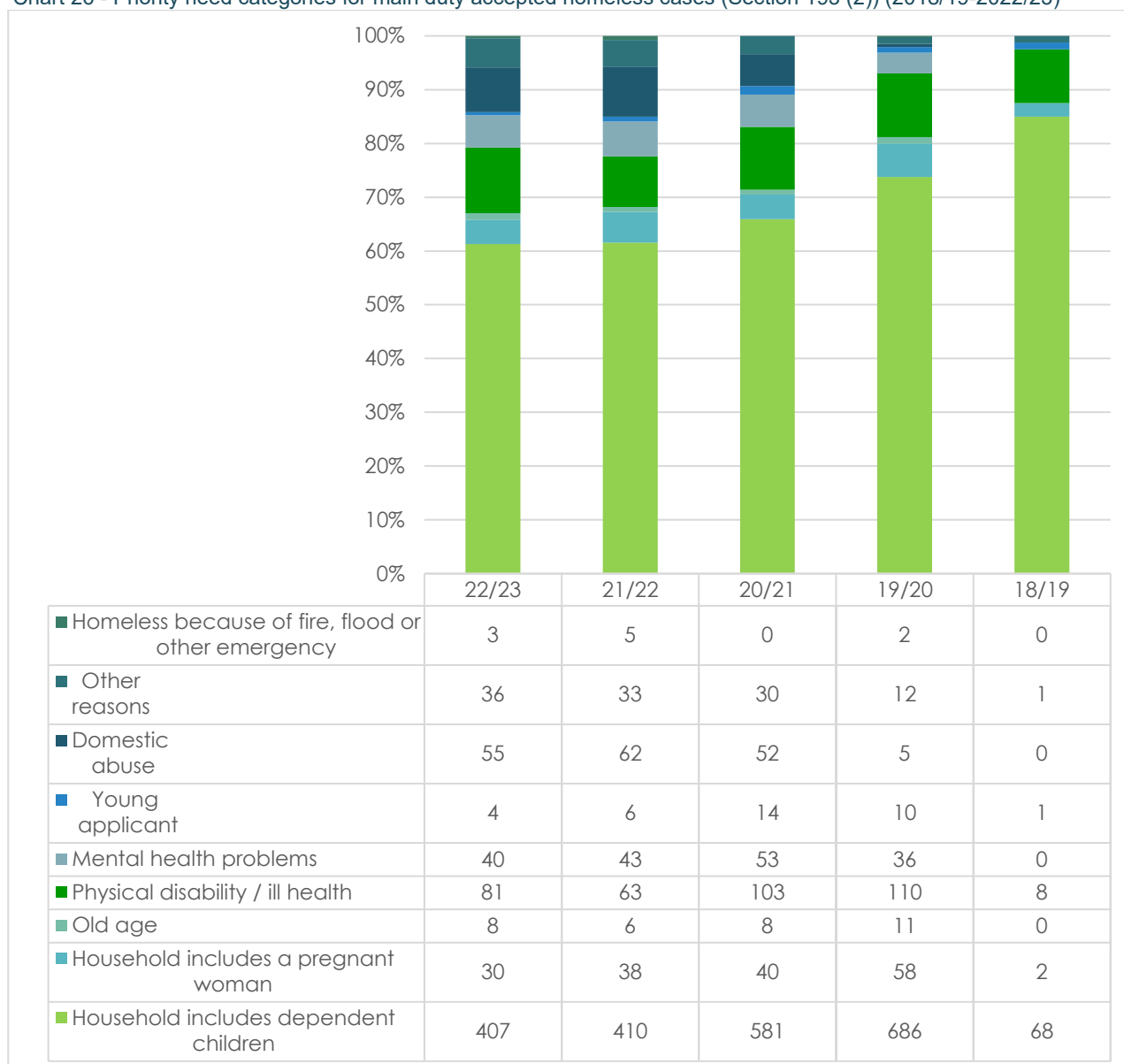
	England			London			Southwark		
	MD Decisions	Acceptances	Acceptance rate	MD Decisions	Acceptances	Acceptance rate	MD Decisions	Acceptances	Acceptance rate
2018 /19	52,190	30,500	58%	12,790	8,820	69%	106	80	75%
2019 /20	62,780	40,340	63%	16,010	11,480	71%	1416	930	66%
2020 /21	63,090	39,570	63%	16,150	11,580	72%	1411	884	63%
2021 /22	62,490	42,460	68%	13,470	10,170	76%	1027	686	67%
2022 /23	74,290	52,800	71%	15,250	12,040	79%	1000	680	68%
21/22 to 22/23 % change			3%			3%			1%

Source: DLUHC Live Tables

8.1 Priority need categories of statutory homelessness

In order to be able to be accepted as homeless and receive a main duty decision under section 193 (2), a homeless person must have a ‘*priority need*’. The chart below sets out the priority need categories for those accepted as homeless in Southwark over the last four years, the most common of which has consistently been because the household includes dependent children. Like “the main reason for homelessness”, officers may only record one priority need category per application. The below chart shows a breakdown of the priority need categories recorded by officers when issuing their decisions. The largest group (2022/23) is those households with dependent children (60%), followed by those with a physical disability/ ill health (12%).

Chart 26 - Priority need categories for main duty accepted homeless cases (Section 193 (2)) (2018/19-2022/23)

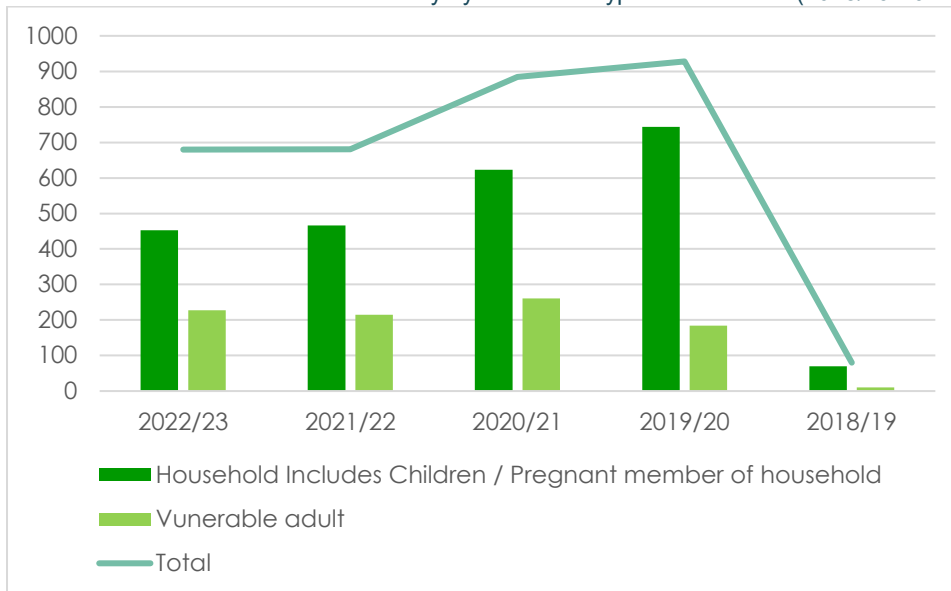


Source: DLUHC Live Tables

8.2 Breakdown of accepted households by household type

When looking at those households that were accepted as homeless and owed a 'main duty' we can see that in Southwark, the percentage share of families being accepted was 67% in 2022/23. The percentage share of families being accepted compared to singles/households with no dependent children has reduced annually since 2018/19. The total accepted households increased most significantly in 2019/20 & 2020/21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.

Chart 27 – Breakdown of households owed a main duty by household type in Southwark (2018/19-2022/23)



Source: DLUHC Live Tables

When compared to neighbouring boroughs Lewisham and Lambeth, Southwark is accepting more families than Lambeth but less than Lewisham as a percentage of total accepted cases. However, compared to the inner London average, these 3 borough accept around 20% more families. The same is true of the London average as a whole.

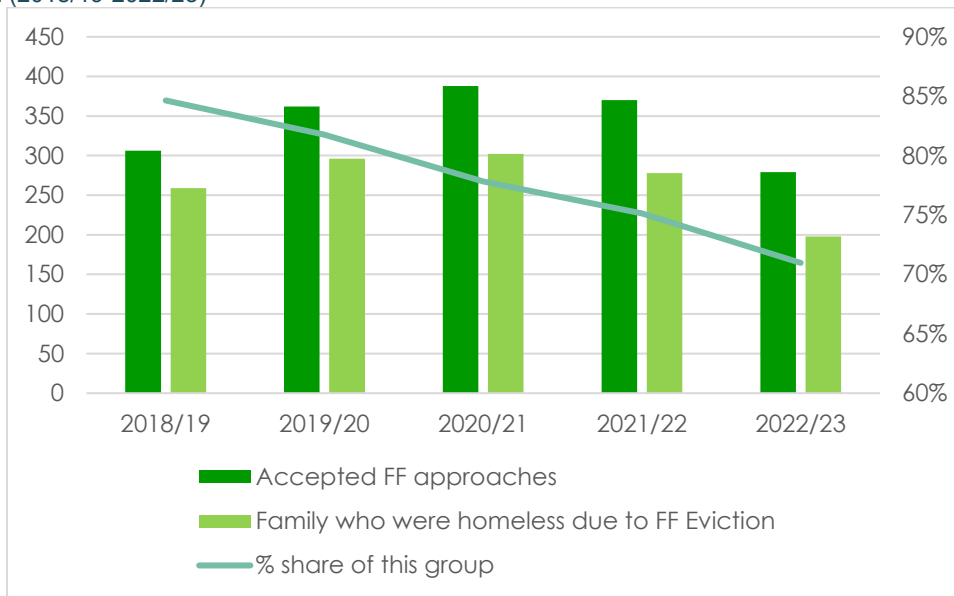
Table 23 – percentage share of families as accepted household's comparison in London

	London average % of accepted cases that were families	Inner London Average % of accepted cases that were families	Southwark % of accepted cases that were families
2022/23	46%	45%	67%

Source: DLUHC Live Tables

It is also interesting to note that of those who were accepted, the top reason for approach in this cohort were those who had been evicted by family and friends. Looking at this further, 71% of these were family households compared to 29% single applicants.

Chart 28 – Breakdown of households composition of those owed a main duty whose approach reason was family and friend eviction (2018/19-2022/23)

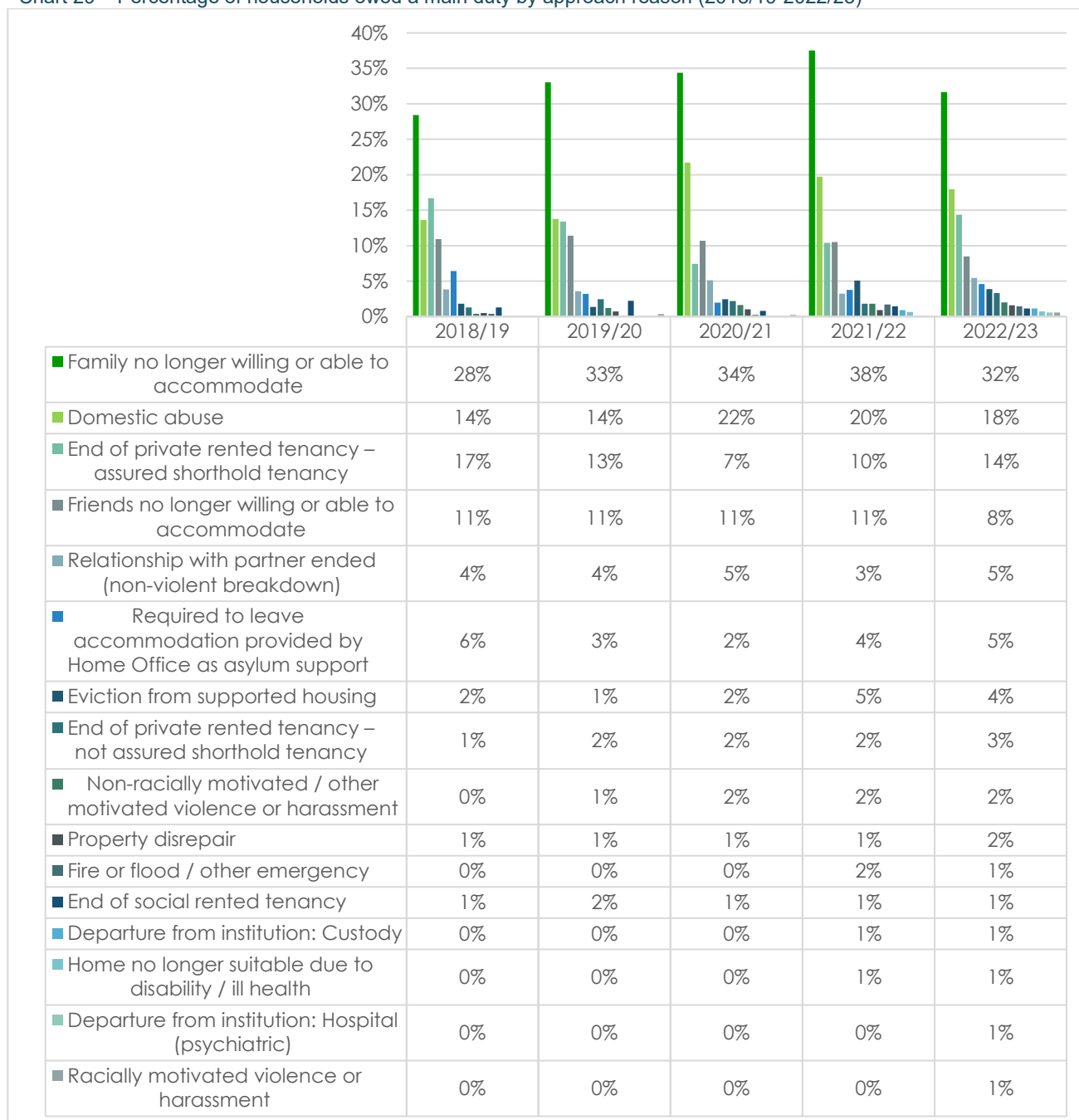


Source: DLUHC Live Tables

8.3 Main duty acceptances by reason for homelessness

If we look at the reason for approach compared to those accepted as homeless and owed an s193 duty, we can see that they largely correlate to the main reason for approach data above. However, those who approached as victims of domestic abuse were the second highest group to be accepted as homeless after family and friends evictions.

Chart 29 – Percentage of households owed a main duty by approach reason (2018/19-2022/23)



9.0 Temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation (TA) may be used by local authorities as an interim solution for those owed a homeless relief duty where the local authority has a reason to believe they may be in priority need. Those placed in TA on approach is discussed in section 4.5 above.

If a homeless household is given a Section 193 ‘main duty’ decision at the end of their homeless relief duty, they will be provided with TA until suitable permanent accommodation becomes available or until the Council makes up to two suitable Private Rented Sector Offers.

TA can include a private flat, a council or housing association leased flat, hostel, B&B or supported housing.

The TA offered to a homeless household in either of the above must be suitable for them and the local authority will take a number of things into account when considering this, including:

- Health needs of the household
- Room/space requirement of the household*
- Affordability of the homeless household
- The location needs of the household

*Local Authorities are prohibited from placing families in shared or B&B accommodation unless in an emergency and in this case, they cannot be in this accommodation for more than 6 weeks.

Households placed in TA are liable to pay rent and may have to pay other charges for items including meals or cleaning services. Households in receipt of benefits or on a low income may be eligible for housing benefit, but this may not cover the rent in full.

Local authorities must continue to provide TA to an accepted homeless household until either:

- Can move into settled accommodation arranged by the local authority;
- Is no longer eligible for assistance;
- Moves out under their own volition;
- Is evicted because of something they have done (e.g. rent arrears or antisocial behaviour); or
- Refuses a final offer of settled accommodation that is suitable for their needs.

Like most inner London local authorities, Southwark is unable to secure enough affordable temporary accommodation to be able to keep all homeless residents housed in the Borough and at times, households must be placed out of the city.

Table 24- Current location of Southwark's TA (as of November 2023)

Area	Total placements (overall total 3806)
Southwark	1760
Surrounding boroughs*	448
London (total)	3645
Out of London	161

Source: Internal records

*Surrounding boroughs: Lewisham, Bromley & Lambeth

Of all TA placements, only 4% are currently outside of London, 46% are in Southwark and 12% are in surrounding boroughs. Placements have been increasingly hard to source

locally. Due to the increase in market rents in Southwark and surrounding boroughs, placements have been increasing sought further out from these areas.

Table 25 - English local authorities with the highest levels households in temporary accommodation (quarter 1, 2022/23)

Local Authority	Number in TA
1. Newham	5,928
2. Birmingham	4,440
3. Southwark	3,550
4. Wandsworth	3,248
5. Enfield	3,098
6. Westminster	3,051
7. Hackney	3,038
8. Redbridge	3,008
9. Tower Hamlets	2,667
10. Lewisham	2,664

Source: DLUHC Live Tables

Table 26 – Number of homeless households in temporary accommodation in Southwark, compared to London and Inner-London borough averages (quarter 1, 2022/23)

Local Authority group	Number in TA
London (average)	1,893
Inner London (average)	2096
Southwark	3550

Source: DLUHC Live Tables

9.1 Supply of temporary accommodation in Southwark

The types of temporary accommodation (TA) being used by Southwark as of November 2023, either to accommodate statutorily homeless households, or those households who are awaiting an outcome from their homeless application can be described as follows:

Type of TA	Units (as of November 2023)	Description
Nightly-paid accommodation	1151	This comprises both self-contained and non-self-contained accommodation purchased on a nightly basis. The council uses this accommodation as a last resort; either in emergencies or when there is nowhere else to place homeless households. This is a very expensive form of TA and impacts on the council's General Fund. It is estimated average nightly cost per placement is £51.

Hostels	33	Southwark has a stock of council owned and managed hostels, which are mainly non self-contained units. Hostels are accounted through the council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the rent collected covers any costs.
Private sector leasing scheme	1314	Self-contained private sector accommodation leased by the council from private landlords at guaranteed rent levels.
Regeneration estate void property	1309	Properties on estates pending regeneration. This accommodation is accounted through the <i>HRA</i> and all costs are covered by rent collected.

Source: Internal records

9.2 Average length of stay in temporary accommodation

The following table shows the average length of time spent in TA for different client groups awaiting suitable housing, as of November 2023. Waiting times for social housing have risen significantly over the past few years, combined with more households approaching as homeless and fewer affordable private lettings available each year for the council to house these households, has led to an increase in the length of stay in TA.

As of November 2023, the average length of stay for a household in TA was 738 days (24 months). For accepted homeless households, this rises to 37 months.

The table below shows the average length of time spent in TA by households making statutory homelessness applications (including those with negative decisions), according to the type of TA in use:

Table 27 – Homeless households average time spent in different types of temporary accommodation, by type (Nov 2023)

Type of Temporary accommodation	Average stay in temporary accommodation
Nightly paid – shared	6.4 months
Nightly paid – self contained	11.5 months
Southwark hostels	4.5 months
In-house private sector leased TA	29.6 months
Estate property	31 months
Overall average	24.2 months*

Source: Internal records

* as this is a calculation of all cases in TA (both accepted cases and those with no duty), the average stay does not account for a client moving to a different TA location or having multiple TA lets during their assessment/waiting time for a suitable offer.

10.0 Support for vulnerable people

10.1 Overview of supported housing

Supported housing schemes provide accommodation for vulnerable people by providing a safe, and supportive environment in order to help them overcome or manage their vulnerabilities. For example, a supported housing scheme may assist with managing mental health, maintaining independence or with rehabilitation.

People may have multiple needs and the sector is diverse in the support offered. Some examples of the group of people who may be best placed in supported housing are:

- older people
- people with a learning/physical disability
- individuals and families at risk of or who have experienced homelessness
- people recovering from drug or alcohol dependence
- people with experience of the criminal justice system
- young people with a support need
- people with mental ill health
- people fleeing domestic abuse and their children

Some supported housing schemes are commissioned by Southwark Council and some by NHS Southwark CCG. The table below shows the current provision of supported housing placements in use as of February 2024:

Table 28- Supported Housing Services and capacity (bed spaces), January 2022

Provider	Services	Age range of customers	Number of bed spaces currently provided
ABC Hillingdon	Care Leavers and Young People	16+	1
Blak Diamond Social Care	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (Older People)	16+	3
Blockchain Care Solutions	Single Homeless Support	16+	2
Bright Young Futures	Care Leavers and Young People	16+	1
Causeway Irish Housing Association	Single Homeless Support	16+	1
Choice Support	Learning Disabilities	16+	1
Clockwise & Care Ltd	Adult care and support (Older People)	50+	1
Committed Care Housing	Care Leavers and Young People	16+	4
Creating Lifestyles	Care Leavers and Young People	16-21	1

Creative Support Solutions	Care Leavers and Young People	16-21	1
DreamFo Housing	Care Leavers and Young People	16+	2
EA Jigsaw	Care Leavers and Young People	16+	1
Eleven D's	Care Leavers and Young People	16+	2
Elliot Leigh TLC	Care Leavers and Young People	16+	2
Esther Swift Limited	Care Leavers and Young People	16+	3
Freshstart	Single Homeless Help and Assistance	18+	1
Future Foundations	Looked After Children/Care Leavers	16-25	21
Harvest Care	Adult care and support (Older People)	50+	6
Hexagon Housing	Adult Care and Support	18+	5
iAspire	Care Leavers and Young People	16-21	1
Ikems Care	Care Leavers and Young People	16-21	1
Independia Ltd	Young person's Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health	16+	1
Joeramass Semi Independent	Care Leavers and Young People	16-25	1
Leaf Community	Care Leavers and Young People	16-25	1
London City Care & Support	Care Leavers and Young People	16+	3
Metropolitan Support Trust	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (Forensic)	18+	8
Oasis Housing Trust	Care Leavers and Young People	16-21	11
Open Minds Social Care	Mental Health support	18+	3
Our Rock Limited	Adult care and support (Older People)	50+	1
Pangea Support Services	Care Leavers and Young People	16+	7
Purple Pebbles	Looked After Children/Care Leavers	16-25	19
Rela Support	Care Leavers and Young People	16+	1
Safe Haven Accommodation	Care Leavers and Young People	16+	1
Sanctuary Care Services	Adult care and support (Older People)	50+	3

Silver Birch Care	Care Leavers and Young People	16+	1
Step Ahead Services	Care Leavers and Young People	16+	1
Salvation Army	Care Leavers and Young People	16-21	36
Tamu Homes Supported Accom.	Learning Disabilities and Mental Health Support	18+	1
The Riverside Group Ltd.	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (Older People)	50+	42
St Mungo's	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (Medium need)	18+	71
Southwark Council	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (Medium need)	18+	55
Thames Reach	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (Medium need)	18+	20
Refuge	Women and children - survivors of domestic abuse	18+	26

Source: Internal records

10.2 Access to supported housing for those with support needs

In Southwark, homeless people with support needs are identified at an initial interview with the housing solutions service. Customers with support needs that would be best suited to supported accommodation are identified by their homelessness caseworker who will complete a same day assessment of the homeless person and refer on to the supported housing providers that would best meet their needs.

If a client's support needs do not meet the threshold for supported housing or the most suitable supported housing is not available, the caseworker will continue to work with the client by giving further advice and assistance to secure independent accommodation along with a referral to our resettlement team if necessary.

10.3 Rough sleepers and help for vulnerable people

Housing Solutions undertakes a number of activities which utilise its £7.35m allocation of Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding from 2022-2025 and £2.09m allocation of Homeless Prevention Grant (HPG) for 2022-2023 (see section 2.1). In line with central Government's Ending Rough Sleeping For Good Strategy 2022, it can be considered that the priorities and objectives of the strategy are largely being met (Prevention, Intervention, Recovery & Joined-up Approach). These existing activities are outlined as below.

- Prevention:

- 6 Homelessness Prevention Officers across the service to focus on homeless prevention outcomes.
 - Ensuring that the early intervention approach is adopted by all partners via duty to refer at the earliest opportunity.
 - Specialist advocacy and support from commissioned partner Solace.
 - Pre- eviction and closure orders protocol with Resident Services, Social Services and where appropriate private landlords.
 - Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Fund £269,000 awarded for 2 Prison Discharge Officers which helps with prevention and joint working between Ministry of Justice & Housing.
 - The use of our data to identify History of Rough Sleeping Support Need for negative homeless decisions which is monitored by our Navigators.
- Intervention
 - A centrally funded and commissioned outreach service with St. Mungo's.
 - An allocation of 17 assessment beds for rough sleepers identified with additional support needs.
 - Outreach officers monitor the current picture of rough sleeping in the borough.
 - Our Quarterly Homelessness Forum attended by community group's help to inform and co-ordinate plans on rough sleeping.
 - Our Rough sleeper initiative funds are used to provide emergency accommodation offered to non-UK nationals who are not eligible for homelessness assistance. Southwark Law Centre also provide case advice, this is now sub regionally funded via London Councils.
 - This fund also provides winter pressure provision of additional bed spaces during the winter months as required.
 - Separately funded project with Change, Grow, Live commissioned through Community Safety has provided accessible and expanded support to rough sleepers with identified needs.
 - Collaboration with Supported Hostels to reserve 12 RSI funded emergency bed spaces for immediate assessments, 50% set aside for rough sleepers with restricted eligibility.
- Recovery
 - Provision of a resettlement package/support for every complex needs individual/rough sleeper moving into an independent tenancy. This includes ongoing work and engagement with our partners to continue to provide support around health wellbeing and reducing re-offending.
 - Employment and skills work is undertaken through partnership with Beam.
 - Expansion of the Council's Housing First Service and utilising the rough sleeper accommodation programme and Right to Buy Back funding opportunities to buy back and use 20 units of accommodation for rough sleepers.

- RSI funded personalised budgets to enable rough sleepers to settle into move on accommodation.
- Transparent and Joined- Up System
 - RSI funding has allowed us to expand partnership working e.g. START mental health support, HIT plus nurse, Southwark Law Centre, Beam and expanded partnership with St Mungos. Work of Navigators acts as a conduit for these services.
 - Referral pathway to Clearing House and other offers of move on accommodation from partners communicated and promoted across the service.
 - Quarterly partnership meetings established with all rough sleeping partners to monitor performance and evidence outcomes. The evidence gathered is used to inform future funding bids.
 - Monthly multi-agency sessions with Southwark, DLUHC and St Mungo's to monitor progress, share successes and challenges etc.

10.4 Rapid Rehousing Project

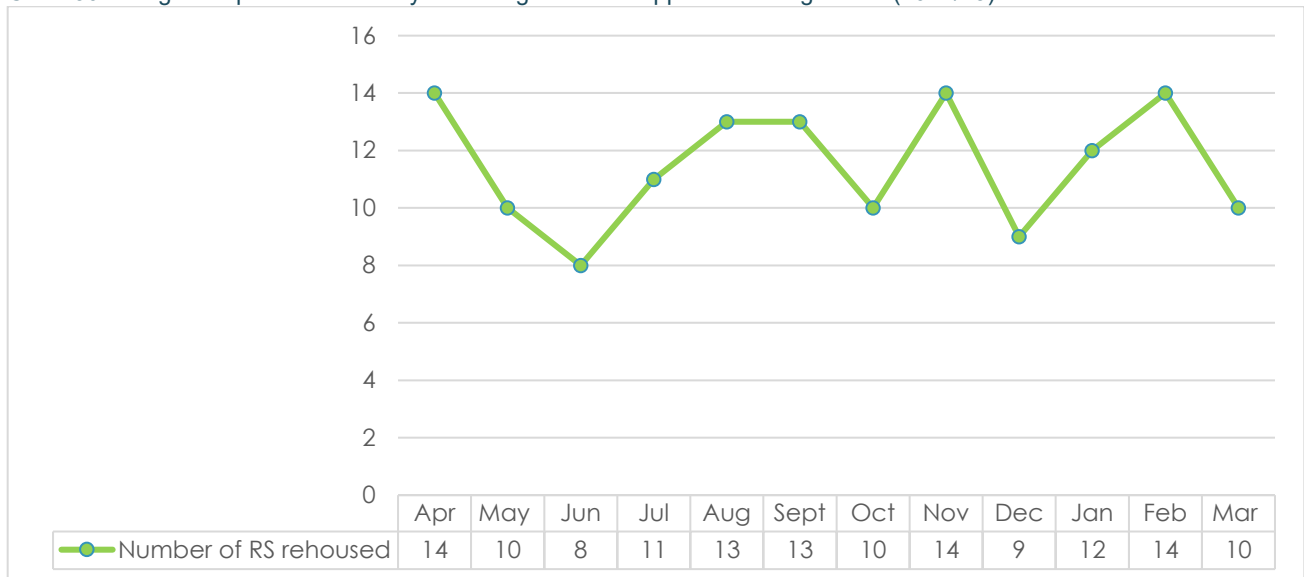
Since 2019 the Rapid Rehousing Project has worked to ensure that rough sleepers with complex needs can work towards longer term accommodation including addressing needs to enable customers to maintain independent accommodation. Referrals are received directly from the street outreach team and Housing Solutions if the customer is identified on approach as a rough sleeper with complex needs.

The team is made up of Navigators who work directly with these customers along with teams of officers offering:

- Rough Sleepers Floating Support - Provide support to complex needs rough sleepers to maintain longer term accommodation. Referrals are from Navigator customers who have been permanently rehoused in either private rented or social housing. 100% of customers over the last year have maintained their accommodation with support from floating support.
- Supported Lettings - procure properties and provide initial tenancy sustainment support to customers moving into the private rented sector who have been rough sleeping and singles at imminent risk of sleeping rough. Referrals received from navigators.
- Accommodation for ex-offenders (AFEO) - A supported letting officer leads on procuring private rented accommodation for offenders recently released from prison deemed able to live independently. Referrals are from St Mungo's Prison Discharge workers who are funded as part of this project to work with this cohort and Housing Solutions

The Rapid Rehousing Project has achieved 138 new PRS tenancies in 2022-2023. And since the beginning of this project in late 2019 the project has been able to sustain 96% of tenancies procured.

Chart 30- Rough sleepers rehoused by the Navigator and Supported Lettings team (2022/23)



Source: Internal records

10.5 Housing First

Housing First is a relatively new programme that replaces the traditional system of transitional accommodation for vulnerable homeless people. It allows those with complex needs to be housed straight away, without the insecurity of temporary accommodation. Housing First works on the concept that other issues can be more easily addressed once stable housing is secured. Southwark now employs four Housing First officers to work with these vulnerable people and was officially adopted into the service in 2017.

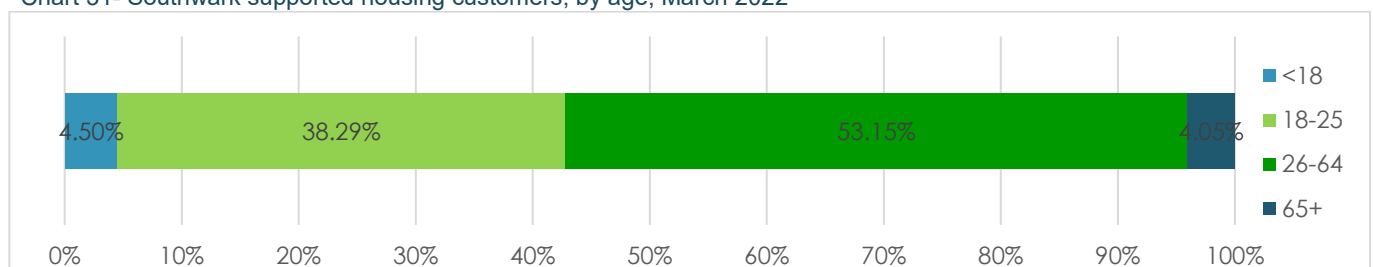
The team provide access to permanent housing as a starting point to help tackle and address un-met non housing needs. This team was expanded at the beginning of 2022/23 to increase the capacity of this team to support our most vulnerable residents.

Currently 43 customers are being supported by the Housing First team, including those graduated from the service.

10.6 Demographics of those accessing supported housing

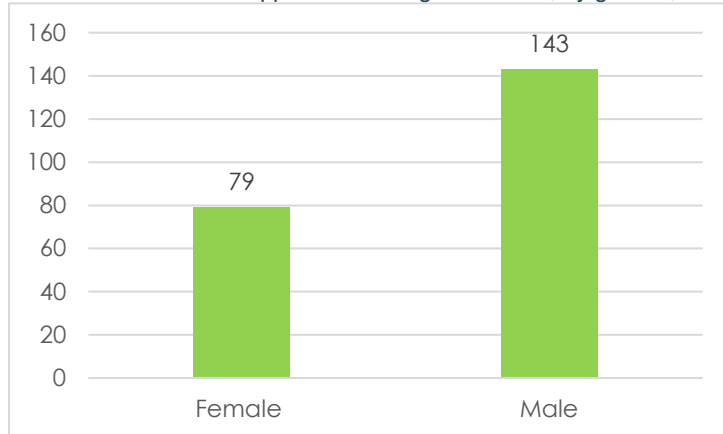
A snapshot of demographic data on those in supported housing in Southwark in 2022 is set out below. The data shows the need to provide services for resident of all ages, genders & ethnicities.

Chart 31- Southwark supported housing customers, by age, March 2022



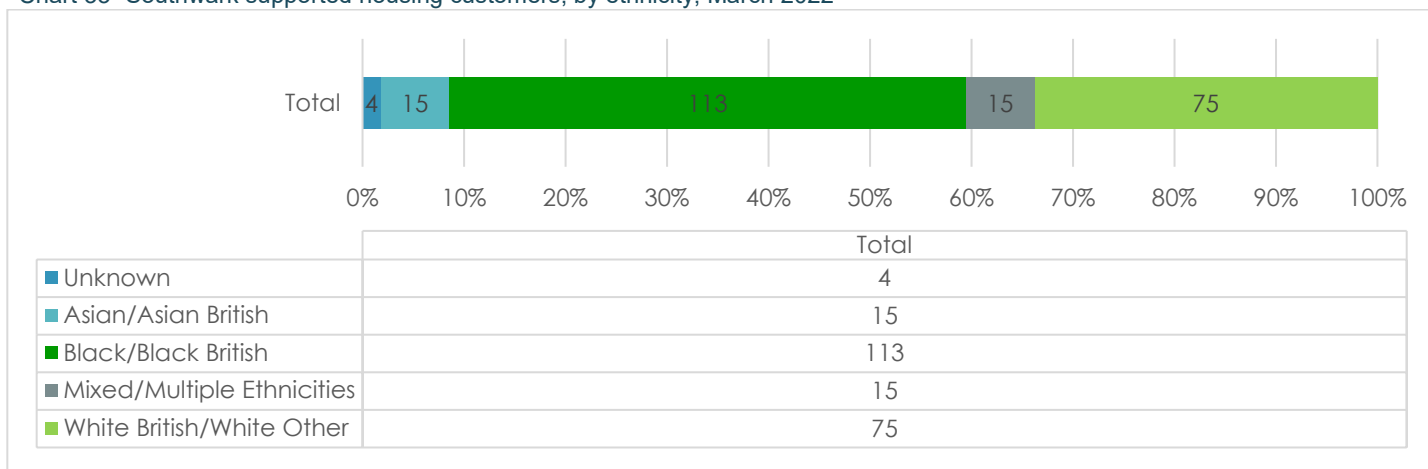
Source: Internal records

Chart 32- Southwark supported housing customers, by gender, March 2022



Source: Internal records

Chart 33- Southwark supported housing customers, by ethnicity, March 2022



Source: Internal records

10.7 Complex Needs and the Complex Needs Advisory Panel (CNAP)

The Complex Needs Advisory Panel exists to minimise homelessness and repeat homelessness amongst people with complex multiple needs. The purpose of the panel chaired by the Rapid Rehousing & Partnership Manager is to ensure that:

- Homelessness and repeat homelessness is prevented amongst people with complex needs wherever possible, through effective joint working and access to appropriate housing, support, social and health care services.
- Limited resources are used effectively and creatively, ensuring that there is consistency across the borough in decision making and resource allocation.
- Advice, information and signposting are provided to referrers.
- Needs and activity levels are monitored effectively and any gaps in service provision are identified and fed into the strategic planning process of agencies represented at panel that includes health, Adult social care, drugs/alcohol commissioning, St Mungo’s Street population team, and South London & Maudsley (SLAM).

In 22/23, there were 29 cases presented to the panel for discussion.

10.8 Mental Health support

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLAM) :

Part of an academic health sciences centre called King's Health Partners with King's College London (KCL), and Guy's and St Thomas' and King's College Hospital NHS foundation trusts. South London and Maudsley (SLAM) NHS Foundation Trust has four main priorities:

1. Deliver outstanding mental health care
2. Be a partner in prevention
3. Be a catalyst for change
4. Build a culture of trust together

10.9 Social Prescribing in Southwark

Social prescribing is a referral service for local agencies to assist their customers with accessing a link worker. Link workers will help the customer to focus on 'what matters to me' and take a holistic approach to people's health and wellbeing. They can support existing community groups as well as working with setting up new initiatives to help residents in their area.

Social prescribing is aimed at a wide range of people, including those with long-term health conditions, those with mental health needs, those facing isolation and people with multiple complex needs affecting wellbeing.

In Southwark, Social Prescribers received 672 referrals in the months June-December 2022. 628 of these cited housing as one of the reasons for referral. 68 included homelessness. This shows the challenge that housing insecurity on residents overall well-being and vulnerability.

11.0 Rough sleeping in Southwark data

11.1 Categories of rough sleeping

The GLA's CHAIN reports categorises a person's experience of rough sleeping, using the following four categories:

Flow Unidentified People who had never been seen rough sleeping prior to the past financial year (i.e. new rough sleepers), - recorded without a name, and with only one contact.

Flow Identified People who had never been seen rough sleeping prior to the financial year (i.e. new rough sleepers), - recorded with a name, and/or with more than one contact.

Stock

People who were also seen rough sleeping in the year previous (i.e. those seen across a minimum of two consecutive years).

Returner

People who were first seen rough sleeping prior to current financial year, but were not seen during current financial year (i.e. those who have had a gap in their rough sleeping).

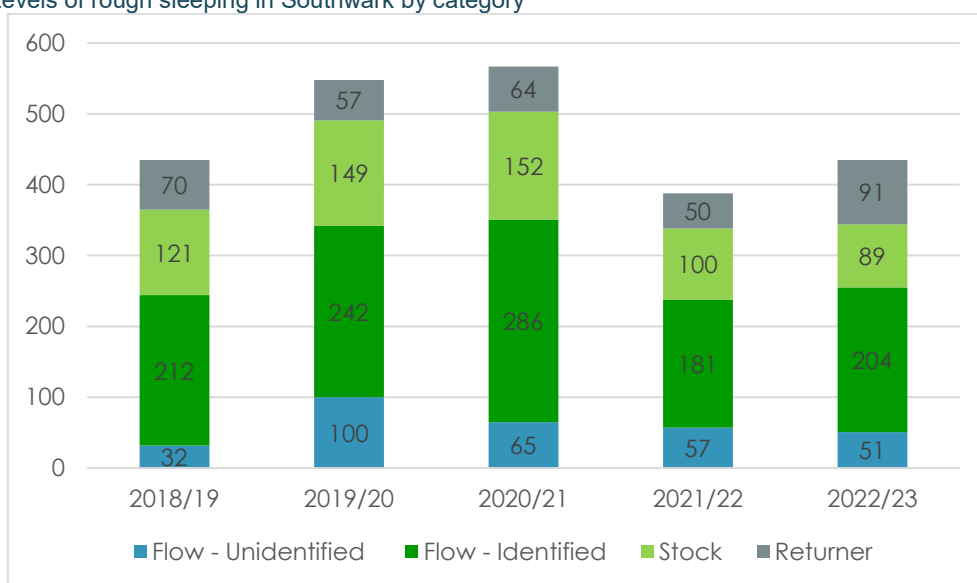
11.2 Levels of rough sleeping in Southwark

For the years 2018/19 & 2019/20, Southwark ranked in the top 5 boroughs in London with the highest number of reported rough sleepers. However, in 2022/23 Southwark placed 26th on the same count.

435 people were seen rough sleeping in the borough in 2022/23. This represents a 12% increase on the previous year.

When breaking this down further, we can see from the below chart that the number of 'stock' rough sleepers has decreased to 20% of all rough sleepers identified from 25% in 2021/22.

Chart 34 – Levels of rough sleeping in Southwark by category



Source: GLA Rough sleeping in London (CHAIN reports)

11.2.1 History prior to rough sleeping

Data is collected on rough sleeper's previous housing history before being made homeless. The below table shows the recorded accommodation of rough sleepers in 2022/23.

Table 29 – Last settled base of rough sleepers in Southwark 2022/23

Last Settled Base	Number	Percentage %
LONG TERM ACCOMMODATION		
Living with family/ friends	22	27.8%

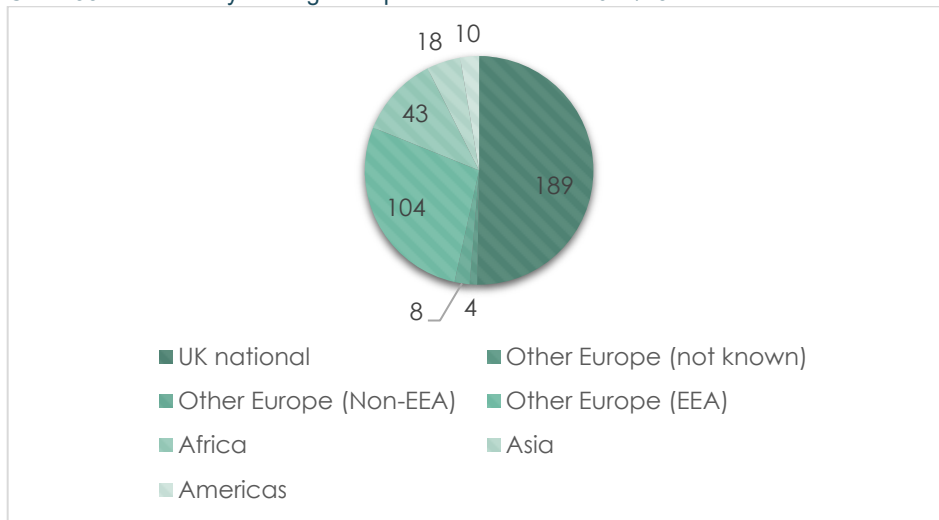
PRS accommodation	24	30.4%
Living with partner	3	3.8%
Living with parents	7	8.9%
LA accommodation	1	1.3%
Housing Association	0	0.0%
Sheltered Housing/registered care	0	0.0%
Tied Accommodation	1	1.3%
Owner Occupied	1	1.3%
TOTAL	59	74.7%
SHORT/MEDIUM TERM ACCOMMODATION		
Hostel	4	5.1%
Asylum support accommodation	4	5.1%
TA (LA)	1	1.3%
B&B/other TA	1	1.3%
TOTAL	10	12.7%
INSTITUTION		
Prison	0	
Hospital	0	
TOTAL	0	
OTHER		
Squat	2	2.5%
Outhouse	0	0.0%
Newly arrived in UK (not homeless in home country)	4	5.1%
Newly arrived in UK (homeless in home country)	0	0.0%
Other	4	5.1%
TOTAL	10	12.7%
NOT RECORDED TOTAL	71	

Source: GLA Rough sleeping in London (CHAIN reports) – Southwark 2022/23

11.2.2 Nationality, gender, age & support needs

Most rough sleepers reported as UK nationals – 50%. The second highest group of rough sleeps were European at 27.7%.

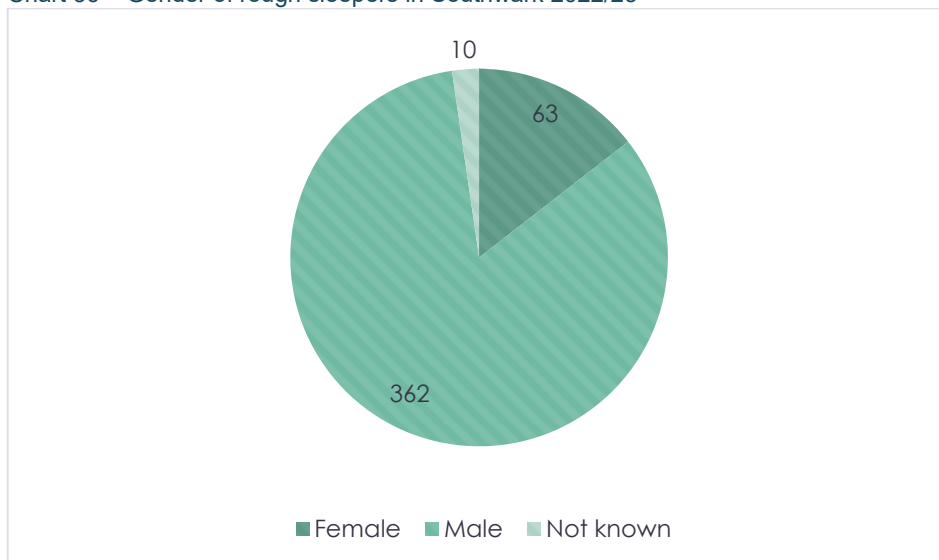
Chart 35 – Nationality of rough sleepers in Southwark 2022/23



Source: GLA Rough sleeping in London (CHAIN reports) – Southwark 2022/23

By gender, rough sleepers were predominantly male in 2022/23. Only 14% of those recorded were female.

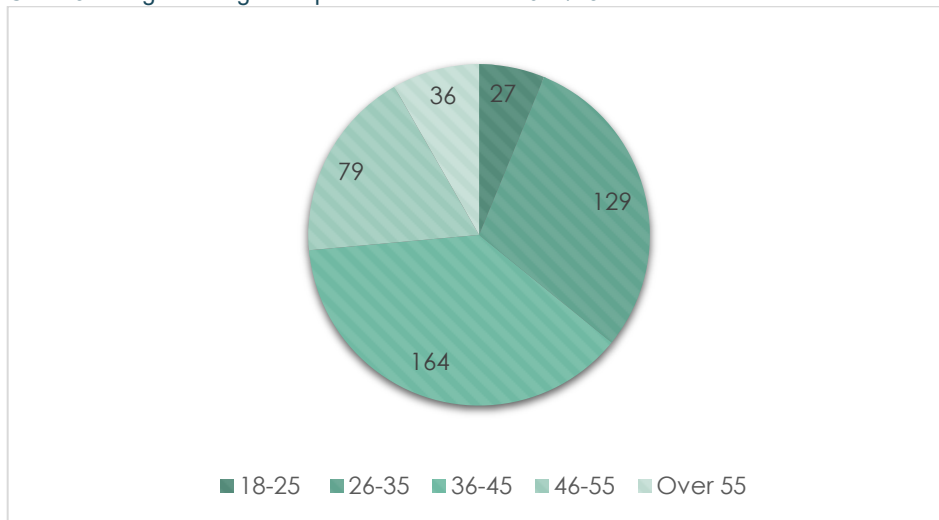
Chart 36 – Gender of rough sleepers in Southwark 2022/23



Source: GLA Rough sleeping in London (CHAIN reports) – Southwark 2022/23

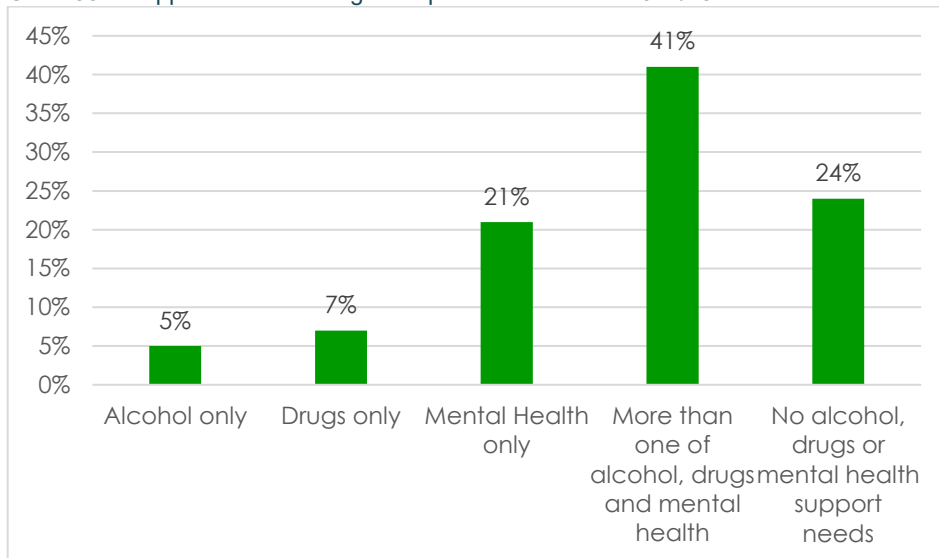
By age, most rough sleepers were between the ages of 36-45 (37.7%) followed by those 26-35 (29.7%).

Chart 37 – Age of rough sleepers in Southwark 2022/23



Source: GLA Rough sleeping in London (CHAIN reports) – Southwark 2022/23

Chart 38 – Support needs of rough sleepers in Southwark 2022/23



Source: GLA Rough sleeping in London (CHAIN reports) – Southwark 2022/23

12.0 No recourse to public funds (NRPF)

In 2021/22 Southwark was supporting approximately 350 NRPF households in total, with those claimants receiving either subsistence or accommodation or both. Approximately 80% of those cases have been provided with temporary accommodation.

The team provide information to all destitute people from abroad with NRPF, including:

- Explaining their situation and possible options;
- Referral and signposting to agencies that assist with voluntary return to country of origin;
- Help and advice on health care;

- Assistance in accessing other services, such as local schools and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes;
- Provision of information about local community organisations.

The NRPF team coordinate needs assessments and where necessary refer customers on to other care services, by:

- Conducting immigration checks;
- Referring individuals to the relevant teams for initial community care and mental health assessments. (If care needs are identified the relevant children's or adults social care team will retain responsibility for the client(s) care packages and future care assessments);
- Carrying out welfare benefit checks;
- Providing accommodation and financial or subsistence support where there is a genuine need demonstrated;
- Regularly reviewing all cases to identify changes in immigration status or financial position.

The Council's NRPF related costs have remained high with spending reaching £6.455 million in 2020/21.

A range of factors contribute to this demand, including Brexit, backlogs in processing of immigration and asylum applications and in the past two years; the pandemic.

13.0 APPENDIX

13.1 Additional information about homelessness and homelessness prevention

13.1.1 Overview of Southwark's main homeless services – Customer journey (remote)

1. Client calls our service duty line or completes an online webform. A Gateway officer will then ensure the client is registered on the system and provided with a reference number. Digitally excluded customers can also still receive face to face appointments and are often supported with relevant agencies and advocates.
2. Once registered, a Gateway officer will establish if the client needs to be triaged for a homelessness assessment.
3. Depending on the outcome of this discussion the Gateway officer will sign post to the services on below:

- Private Rented Sector Team (PRST) Triage - Help customers with any issues regarding their Private rented accommodation that mean they are threatened with homeless or may be street homeless.
 - Gateway Customer Service Triage officer- Help customers who are threatened with homelessness or may be street homeless.
4. During the triage assessment, the officer will attempt to establish the following:
- Eligibility for assistance, current accommodation circumstance, local connection to the borough, priority need/support needs.
 - The client will be provided with advice on remaining in accommodation or plan a housing move, and the options available to them in a homeless application. The triage officer will book an appointment to see a Housing solutions caseworker should the client be threatened with homelessness or homeless on the day.
 - If the client is homeless on the day and the triage officer has reason to believe the applicant is in priority need, the officer will request a temporary accommodation booking.
5. At the assessment the caseworker will advise the client on the following options:
- a. Supported Housing – If you are a single client and you believe you are in need of supported housing as you have support needs and feel they need assistance to manage a tenancy by themselves.
 - b. Private accommodation – For all other groups of customer, we will commence a joint effort in finding accommodation for the client. You will be provided with information on products that we offer including our ‘Self Help’ pack. The Self Help pack explains what will happen if the client finds accommodation themselves. We will also discuss our housing supply team who will help to find accommodation using their Tenancy Finding Service.
 - c. Social Housing – Should the client and the Council not find suitable accommodation, we will then look to make a decision on whether or not the client qualifies for Social Housing.
6. Assuming the client is eligible for assistance and homeless/threatened with homelessness, the client will be issued with a personal housing plan (PHP) which details the agreed steps between the council and the applicant to prevent/relieve their homelessness. They will also be issued with a notification of the homelessness duty they are owed (prevention or relief).
7. Should the client remain homeless at the end of their homelessness duty, the caseworker will make a decision on whether the client has a ‘priority need’ and if they are subsequently ‘intentionally homeless’. If the client is found to be in priority need

and not intentionally homeless, the client will be an accepted homeless case and provided with a bidding number.

13.1.2 Overview of Southwark's main homeless services – Customer journey (In person)

Overview of Customer Journey to access 25 Bournemouth Road

Below is a brief overview of the Customer Journey to access 25 Bournemouth Road

The customer approaches and will press the external intercom buzzer, which will put them through to floor walker #1 who will communicate with the customer using the intercom microphone. The floor walker will quickly ascertain whether the customer has a pre-booked appointment, if they have an appointment they will be granted access to the building once reception verifies this on the system.

If the customer has no appointment and is approaching in an emergency, floor walker #1 will determine whether they require a face to face triage. This will take place in the space between the main door and second entrance, the second door will remain closed at this point. Security guard #1 will be positioned within this space to support the floor walker responsible for the initial screening.

Customer service skills are of high importance and therefore the floor walker will offer an immediate call back to all customers who are buzzed through for the initial screening that do not meet the remit for a face to face triage.

If the customer meets the vulnerable criteria/digitally excluded criteria they will be directed to the reception for initial screening and triage assessment. The triage officer will book a full Housing Assessment interview on the day or in the near future via Q-matic. If required the customer will then be signposted to the Temporary Accommodation team after their appointment. The security guard #2 will be present on the reception floor in close proximity to support security guard #1.

Floor walker #2 will be responsible for managing customers in the reception waiting area and assessing those who are waiting for TA using the vulnerability and digital exclusion questionnaire.

Security guard #3 will monitor the CCTV operations for tailgating purposes and will communicate with security guards #1 & #2 and Gateway manager using the walkie-talkies

Security guard #4 will monitor the interview rooms for safety and offer rotational breaks for their colleagues.

Vulnerability/digital exclusion criteria

Those that meet the Vulnerability or digitally excluded threshold are:

Homeless today or tomorrow - Where there is a need for same day assessment and therefore potentially accommodation provision immediately.

Domestic abuse - Depending on safety at home, and feedback from customer, may be for all or only some of our transactions (e.g. PHP).

Vulnerability - Where this impacts on the ability to engage with the interview process and or advice and this can be more effectively supported face to face

Digitally excluded - Particularly rough sleepers or others without access to telephone or IT to support remote work.

Verification of identity Fraud prevention - to be completed before an offer of any accommodation (PRS, TA or social) where a video call is not possible.

Other situations approved by the manager on duty - Agreed with the duty manager.

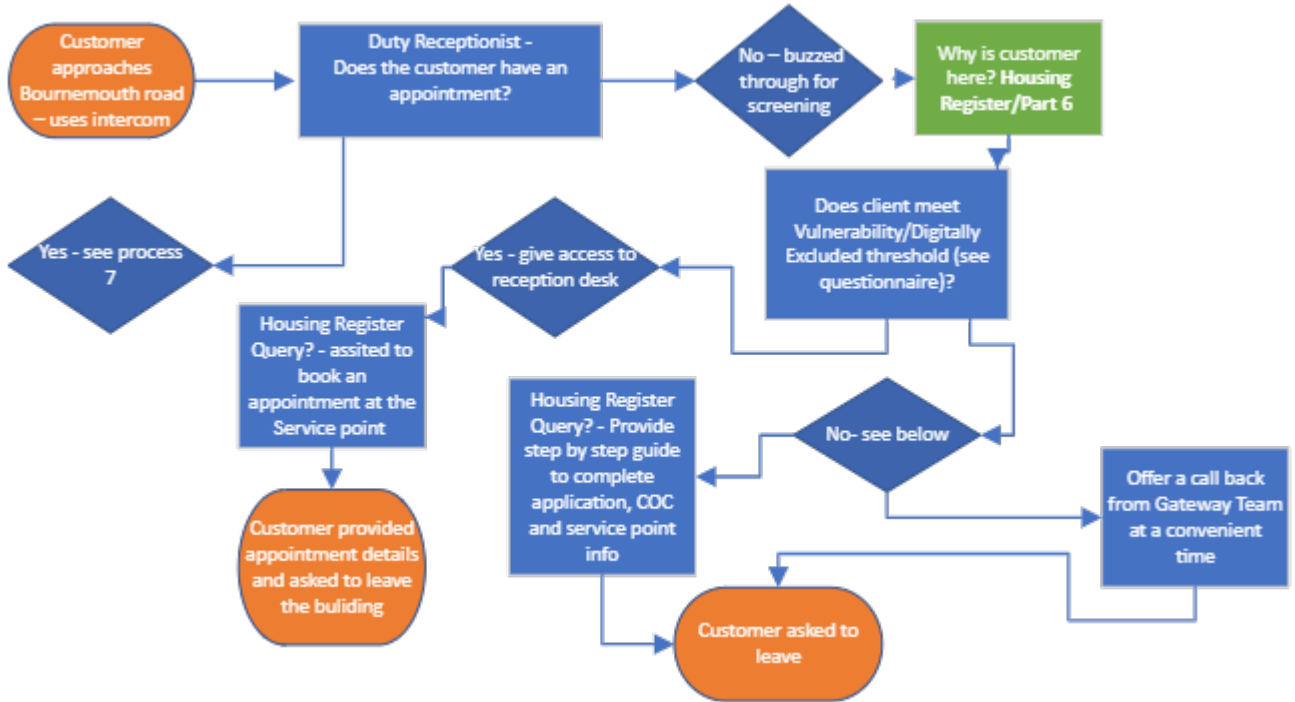
Vulnerability Questionnaire

Floor walker #1 (FW #2) to complete the below for all customers looking to access the building to determine face to face provision

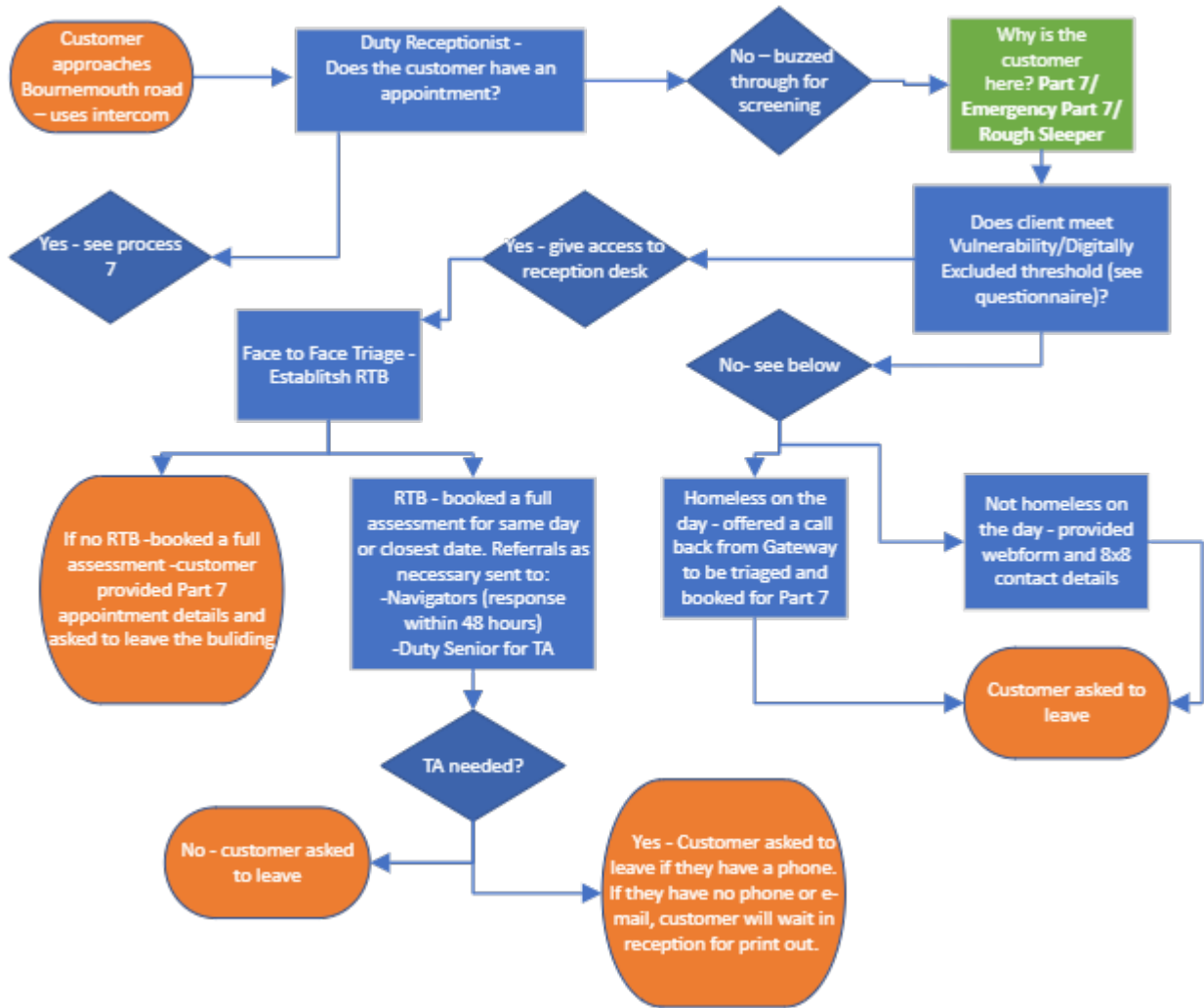
Floor walker #2 (FW #2) to complete the below for all customers who are waiting for TA following the completion of a face to face interview to determine TA access provision

1. Homeless today or tomorrow?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
2. Have you experienced domestic abuse?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
3. Are you able to read & write?
 - a. Yes
 - b. **No**
4. Is there reason to believe client is vulnerable due to old age?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
5. Are you 16 –17 year old?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
6. Are you a 'Looked after child' with social services?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
7. Have you served in the armed forces?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
8. Have you ceased to occupy accommodation due to threats of violence?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
9. Do you have a phone that receives calls?
 - a. Yes
 - b. **No**

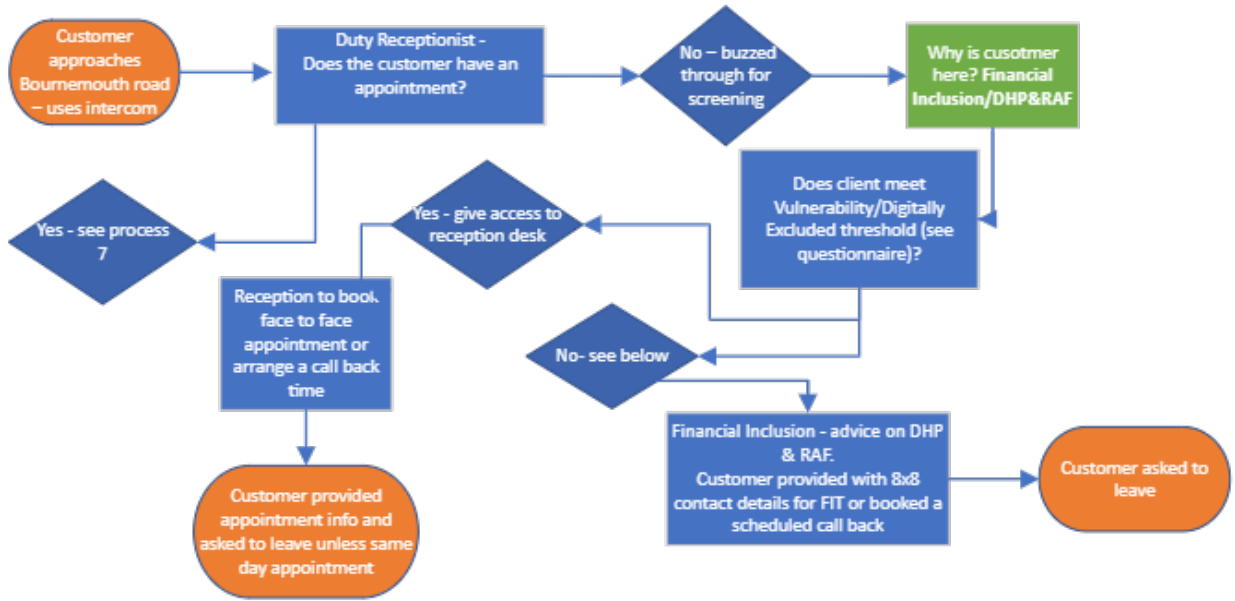
No appointment process



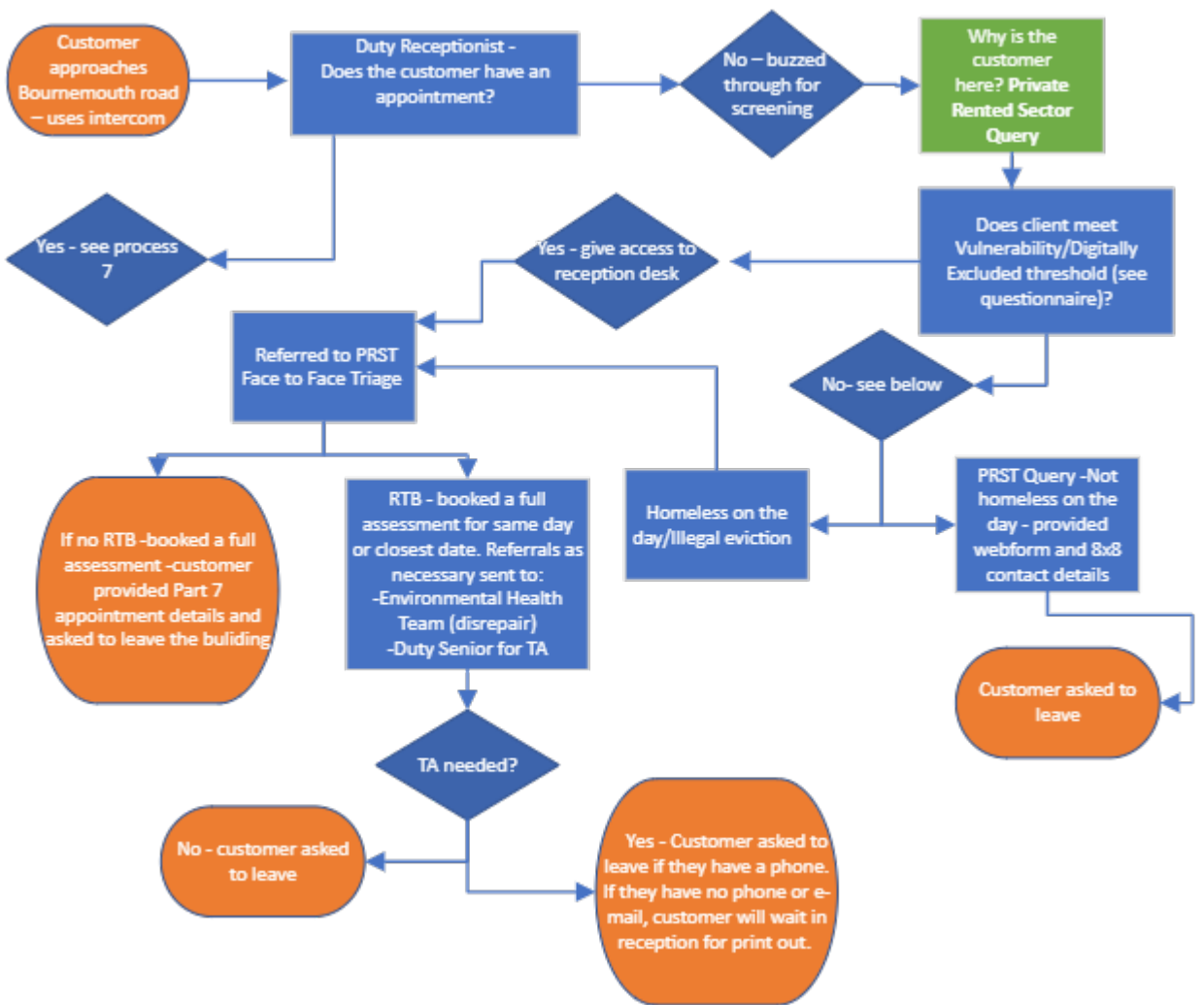
2. NO APPOINTMENT – PART 7/ PART7 EMERGENCY /RRH



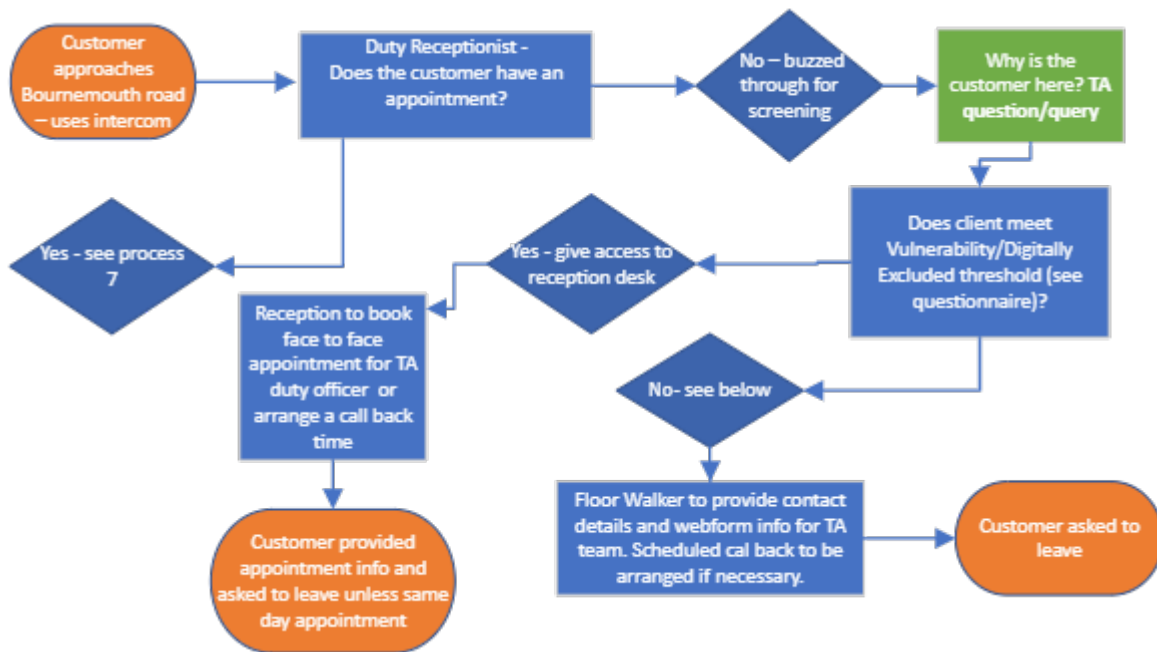
3. No APPOINTMENT - FIT



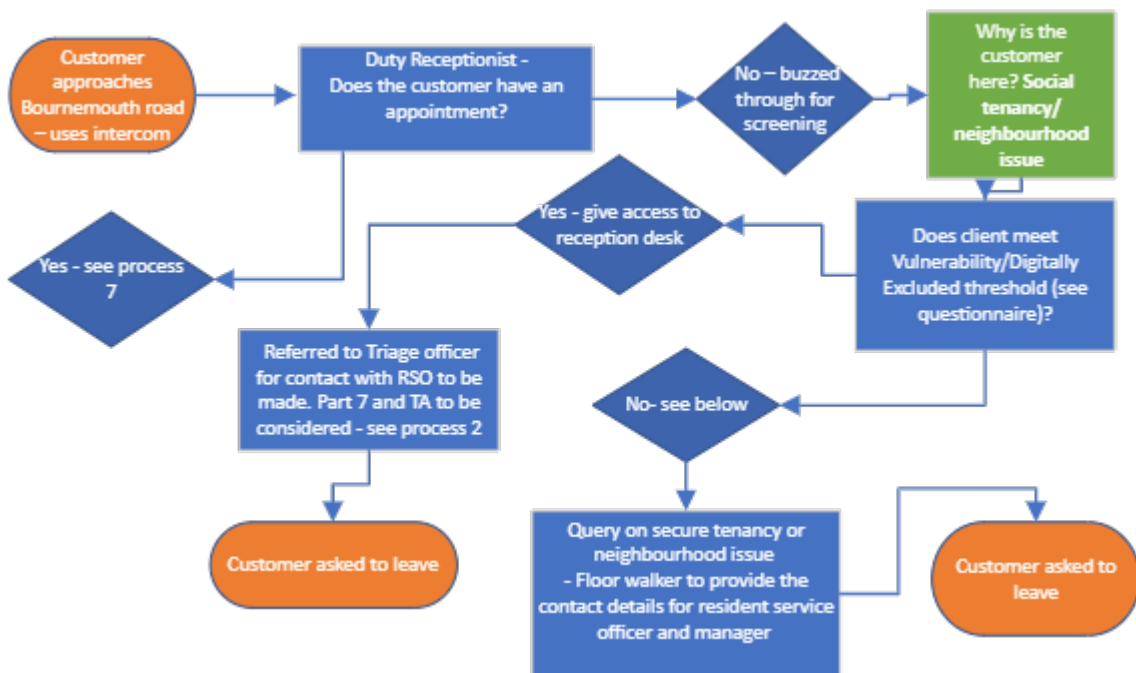
4. NO APPOINTMENT - PRST



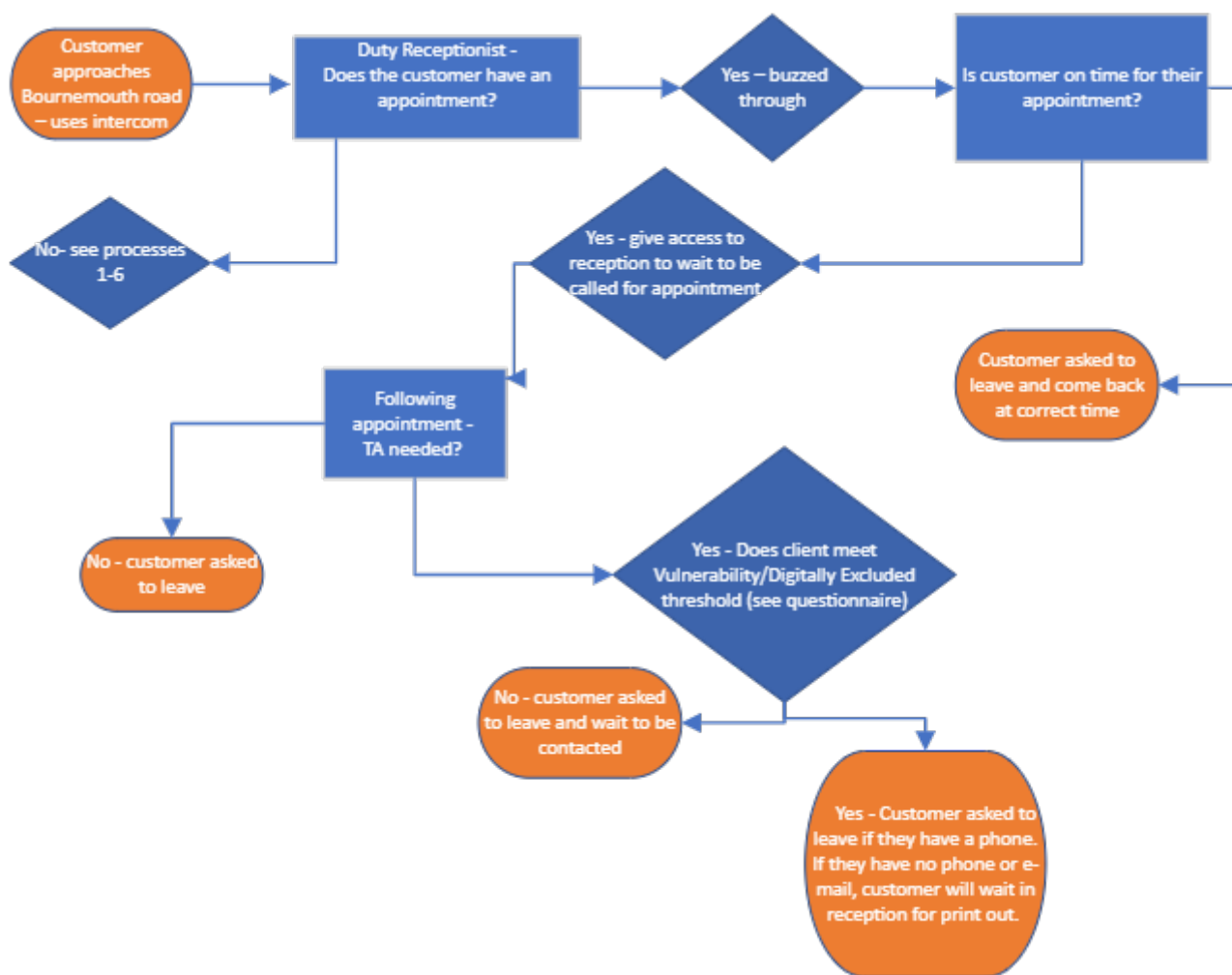
5. No APPOINTMENT – TA



6. No APPOINTMENT – SECURE COUNCIL TENANTS



7. Pre-booked appointment process (all services)



13.1.3 Overview of Southwark’s main homeless services – Duty to Refer Process

Making a referral to Southwark Council

Social Prescribers can refer all patients they consider to be homeless; threatened with homelessness or due to be discharged to accommodation which is not suitable. All referrals should be made using the referral form via the following link – https://forms.southwark.gov.uk/ShowForm.asp?fm_fid=2115

Separate electronic forms (and a copy of which can be seen in **appendix 1**) held locally can also be sent to the following address – dutytorefer@southwark.gov.uk

- 1.1 The Homelessness and Housing Options Services is a housing service provided by Southwark Council for customers who require advice and support to sustain accommodation where possible or to secure suitable alternative accommodation if required.
- 1.2 It aims to help people with a range of circumstances e.g. fleeing domestic abuse, young single homeless households, homeless families, people with complex multiple needs, alcohol and or drug addiction, a history of offending, learning difficulties, physical disabilities and mental health needs.

- 1.3 The Homelessness and Housing Options service role is to undertake a detailed housing needs assessment of people referred to them. The Homelessness and Housing Options work with colleagues elsewhere in the housing service, to prevent homelessness wherever possible and through a personalised housing plan, are supported to secure suitable alternative accommodation.

Dealing with the referral

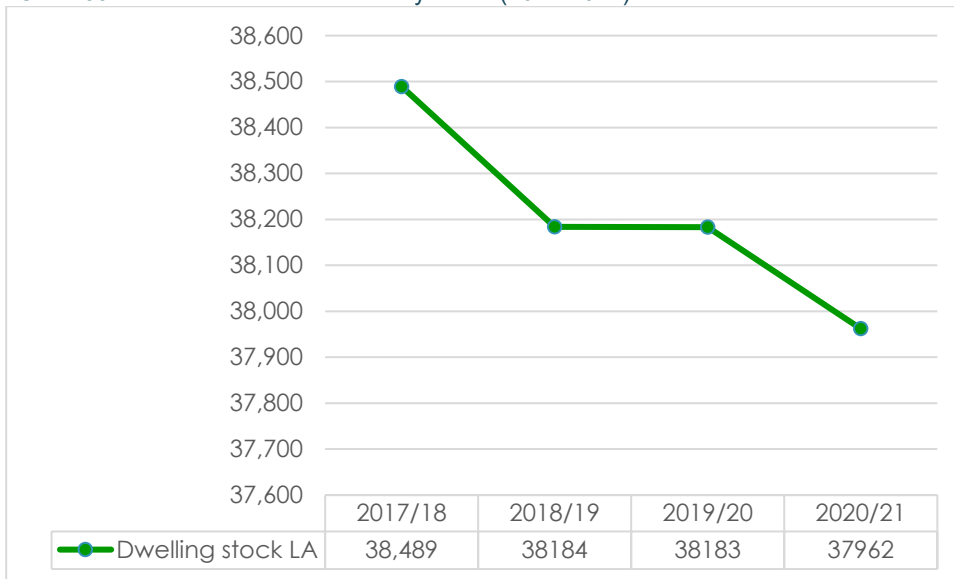
- 2.1 A referral can be made at any time of day and will be picked up within 24 hours following a working day submission. The service will aim to complete an initial assessment or triage within 72 hours of receiving a referral.
- 2.2 A Gateway officer will contact the patient and the referrer to complete a triage assessment via telephone, during which time they will seek to identify how we can help the client prevent or relieve homelessness.
- 2.3 The Homelessness and Housing Options service will then work together with the client and referrer to explore whether homeless prevention is possible and to appraise the client of their housing options. Their referral will then be discussed with the Duty Senior Manager for a full homeless assessment to be scheduled. During the triage process, the following documentation should be provided –
1. *Identification that confirms applicant is eligible for public funds (passport/biometric card and home office letter if subject to immigration control)*
 2. *Evidence of homelessness/threat of homelessness.*
- 2.4 If core documentation requested is pending, then an appointment can be provided and efforts should continue to be made by the client and referrer to obtain the above. **The service will not be able to agree and secure emergency accommodation without the documentation required at triage.**
- 2.5 **Should a client be homeless, eligible for public funds and it is agreed there is reason to believe they may be vulnerable, Housing Solutions will seek to secure emergency accommodation pending their full assessment. Please note this provision is scarce and will not likely be within the Borough and clients must be made aware of this.**
- 2.6 There may be some instances where the above timescales are not met, to follow up on assessment interviews and visiting officers, queries should be referred in the first instance to the Duty Senior Officer and by emailing dutyseniorinbox@southwark.gov.uk and housing.options@southwark.gov.uk where we will aim to respond on the day of the enquiry.
- 2.7 If as response relating to the triage and assessment of a client is outstanding for more than 24hours, then queries can be referred to Jerome Duffy, Programme, Policy and Change Manager, Housing Solutions – Jerome.duffy@southwark.gov.uk

13.3 Southwark’s housing register

13.3.1 Overview of Housing Register

The number of people on the Southwark Housing Register has grown significantly since 2016. Previous to this, the number of applicants dropped with the introduction of the 5 year local connection rule in 2015. Since 2016, numbers have increased from 11,583 to 17,275 (as at September 2022). This is due to number of factors including, welfare benefit changes, dwindling Local Authority stock and increasing private rents in the area.

Chart 39 –Southwark’s Local Authority Stock (2017-2021)



Source: Internal data

The Right to Buy along with a slowdown new build Local Authority properties has led to a continual decrease in the number of Southwark’s dwelling stock. This is a pattern repeated across England as a whole. This has meant that new lets to those on our housing register have decreased annually.

13.3.2 Analysis of housing register by the number of bedrooms required

Table 30 Analysis of Southwark’s housing register by the number of bedrooms required by applicants (March 2022)

Bed Need	Total Households
1	8440
2	4360
3	2911
4	1127
5	314
6	60
7	19
8	2
Unknown	42
TOTAL	17275

Southwark's housing register is split into priority categories. Overcrowding is the most common reason for an applicant to join the register. This is followed by homelessness and then medical needs. The table above shows that there is the greatest need for 1 bedroom properties. When looking at households who are on the register due to overcrowding, the greatest need is for 3 bed properties.

GLOSSARY

Affordable housing: Housing for people that cannot afford market rent homes.

Social housing: This is rented housing for people with low incomes and are on the council's Housing Waiting List.

Children's Services: The department of the council which is responsible for the welfare of children and young people.

Discretionary Housing Payment: Available to applicants receiving Universal Credit or Housing Benefit. These payments can make up the difference, or some of the difference, between Local Housing Allowance or the housing element of Universal Credit and rents.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA): The Valuation Office Agency determines LHA rates used to calculate housing benefit for tenants renting from private landlords.

Fitness for Human Habitation Act 2018: Legislation which came into force in March 2019, enabling tenants to take action against their landlords if their homes are not fit to be lived in.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017: Implemented officially from April 2018, but trail blazed by Southwark from 2017, the Act has significantly changed the way in which homelessness is dealt with. There is now a requirement on local authorities to help anyone eligible threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days, as well as a duty to help relieve homelessness, if it can't be prevented.

Housing Solutions Service: The council's frontline homelessness service which provides support for residents who need housing advice or are threatened with homelessness.

No fault evictions: These are where a landlord evicts a tenant at short (two months) notice and without a reason (also known as Section 21 evictions).

Personal Housing Plans: An agreed plan between the council and the person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness, setting out the agreed actions the person and the council will take to help prevent them from becoming homeless or to help them secure accommodation.

Registered Providers: Not for profit or charitable organisations that provide social housing separate to that of the council stock.

Temporary Accommodation: Emergency accommodation provided by the council for homeless households.