

Homelessness

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Chapter 18. Homelessness

18.1 Introduction

This report looks at reported, formal homelessness – applications, acceptances, and subsequent housing outcomes - in the Cambridge sub-region. The first section examines the number of statutory homelessness decisions made by each local authority from 2000/01 to 2005/6, and concentrates on those in priority need. The second section focuses on households in temporary accommodation and those who are “homeless at home”. The final section looks at social and local authority lets to homeless households. An appendix provides details of the Homelessness Strategies produced by the local authorities in the sub-region in recent years.

Information on the number of decisions and numbers of households in temporary accommodation is taken from quarterly (three-monthly) P1E returns, which are monitoring forms completed by local authorities and returned to the CLG. Data on housing needs registers is taken from the HSSA. Data on reasons for social housing let to homeless households comes from HSSA and CORE. It should be noted that CORE data currently excludes local authority stock in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire.

18.2 Homelessness decisions

Table 1: Total Decisions by 2000/01-2005/06

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Cambridge City	275	124	362	258	208
East Cambridgeshire	230	184	229	249	225
Fenland	160	146	160	141	146
Huntingdonshire	304	280	291	361	292
South Cambridgeshire	203	244	194	180	170
Forest Heath	103	104	69	65	109
St Edmundsbury	151	182	168	251	155
Sub-Region	1,426	1,264	1,473	1,505	1,305

Source P1E returns

Figures in grey represent incomplete data. Between 2001 and 2006, the number of homelessness decisions fell slightly in all districts except St Edmundsbury. Cambridge City had the largest decrease, but it also had the highest number of acceptances in the period. All areas had a peak in the number of acceptances between 2003/04 and 2004/05, reflecting a national peak in homelessness in 2004.

In 2002, the Homelessness Act introduced new categories of priority need, which may have affected the overall number of decisions in the following year. Nationally, homelessness peaked in 2004, so the areas where this occurred locally may have been following the national trend. As well as widening the definition of priority need, there has been an increased emphasis on preventing homelessness by, for example, providing housing advice for people coming to the end of shorthold tenancies, mediation services for families in crisis and support to help people sustain their tenancies. Summaries of the seven local authorities' homelessness strategies are included in appendix 1. Fig 1 shows a breakdown of the outcomes of the decisions made in 2005/06. Appendix 2 provides a more detailed breakdown of decisions made between 2000 and 2007.

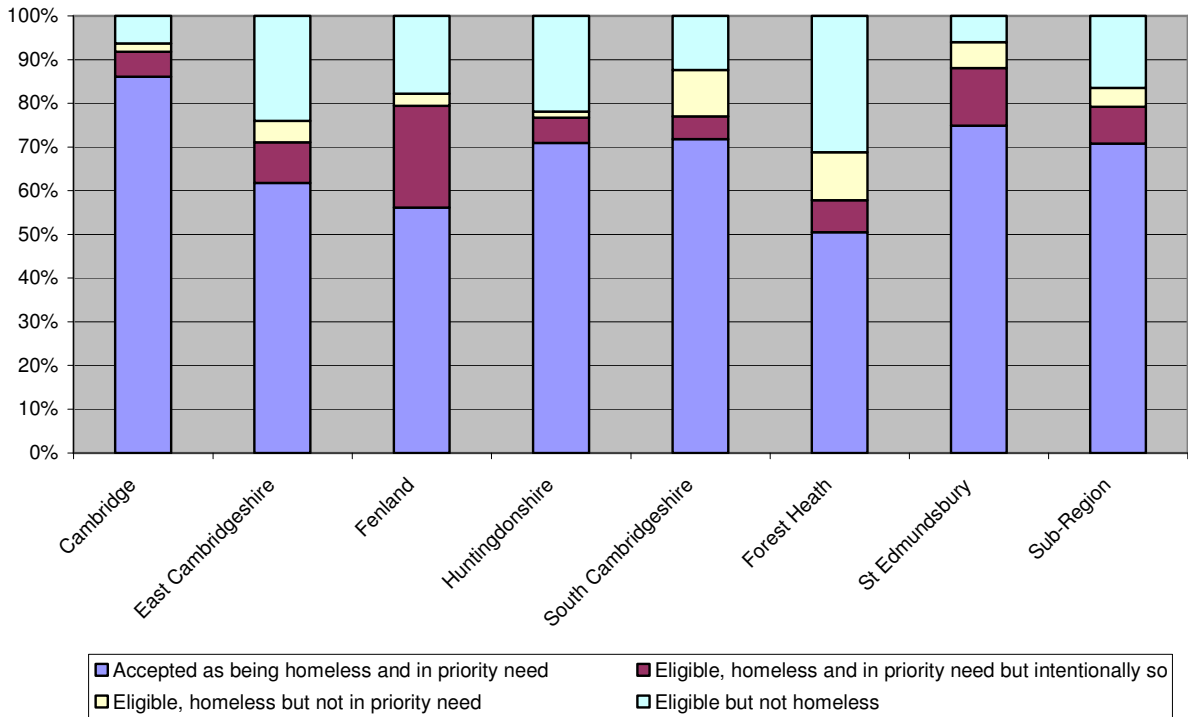
In all districts, households accepted as being in priority need¹ make up the largest portion of those accepted as homeless. The second largest category of decisions is households who are “eligible but not homeless”. These data do not contain any figures for households who are not eligible for any assistance e.g. because of immigration constraints.

Each household approaching the district as homeless has their case considered and a decision made on whether they qualify for assistance with their problem or not. This decision is based on a series of tests, which are set out in Appendix 3.

All homelessness decision made by the district will fall into one of these four categories, which are summarised in Appendix 3. Households are accepted as being in priority need if they include someone who is vulnerable, e.g. because of pregnancy, dependent children, old age or disability, domestic violence and people made homeless because of natural disasters. In 2002 priority need categories were extended to include applicants previously over-represented amongst those sleeping rough, i.e.

- People aged 16 or 17.
- Young adults leaving care (aged 18-20).
- People leaving the armed forces.
- People leaving prison.

Fig 1: Homelessness decisions by type, 2005/06



Source: P1E Returns

¹ Priority need and households in temporary accommodation are necessary pieces of information for the Housing Market Assessment.

Table 2 looks at the number of households accepted as homeless, in priority need and unintentionally homeless between 2001/2 and 2005/6, to show the trend for each district and across the sub-region.

Table 2: Households Accepted as Homeless, 2001-06

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	Total
Cambridge	203	130	261	204	179	977
East Cambridgeshire	207	150	185	192	139	873
Fenland	107	102	122	103	82	516
Huntingdonshire	192	251	233	254	207	1137
South Cambridgeshire	148	103	129	116	122	618
Forest Heath	43	45	57	55	55	255
St Edmundsbury	120	146	141	188	139	734
Sub-Region	1,020	927	1,128	1,112	923	5110

(Source: P1E Returns)

The number of households in priority need has fallen in Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, and South Cambridgeshire, but has increased in Huntingdonshire and St Edmundsbury. Huntingdonshire and St Edmundsbury had a peak in the number of priority need acceptances a year later than the other districts and have since fallen. The number of acceptances for the sub-region has fallen. To help compare these figures, Table 3 shows the number of priority homeless cases divided by the number of households in each district.

Table 3: Priority need homeless households as % of total households by district

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Cambridge	0.46%	0.20%	0.58%	0.45%	0.39%
East Cambridgeshire	0.66%	0.47%	0.57%	0.58%	0.41%
Fenland	0.29%	0.27%	0.32%	0.26%	0.21%
Huntingdonshire	0.35%	0.45%	0.42%	0.45%	0.36%
South Cambridgeshire	0.23%	0.16%	0.19%	0.17%	0.18%
Forest Heath	0.18%	0.18%	0.23%	0.22%	0.22%
St Edmundsbury	0.28%	0.34%	0.33%	0.43%	0.31%
Sub-Region	0.34%	0.31%	0.37%	0.36%	0.29%

Source: P1E Returns, CCCRG²

The percentage of households accepted as homeless and in priority need across the sub-region ranges from 0.29 in 2005/6 to 0.37% in 2003/4. Cambridge City and East Cambridgeshire have a higher percentage of priority need households although this has decreased in each district, particularly East Cambridgeshire (there is missing data for 2003 in Cambridge City). The percentage of households in priority need in Fenland, South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire has also decreased over the five-year period.

Incomplete data for 2002 and 2004 in Forest Heath makes it difficult to see what has happened, but there has been a small decrease from 2003 to 2006. There has been a slight increase in South Cambridgeshire (from 0.35 in 2002 –to 0.45 in 2005), but decreased after that. A similar pattern has happened in St Edmundsbury.

² The number of households in each district was calculated by Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group

18.3 Temporary Accommodation

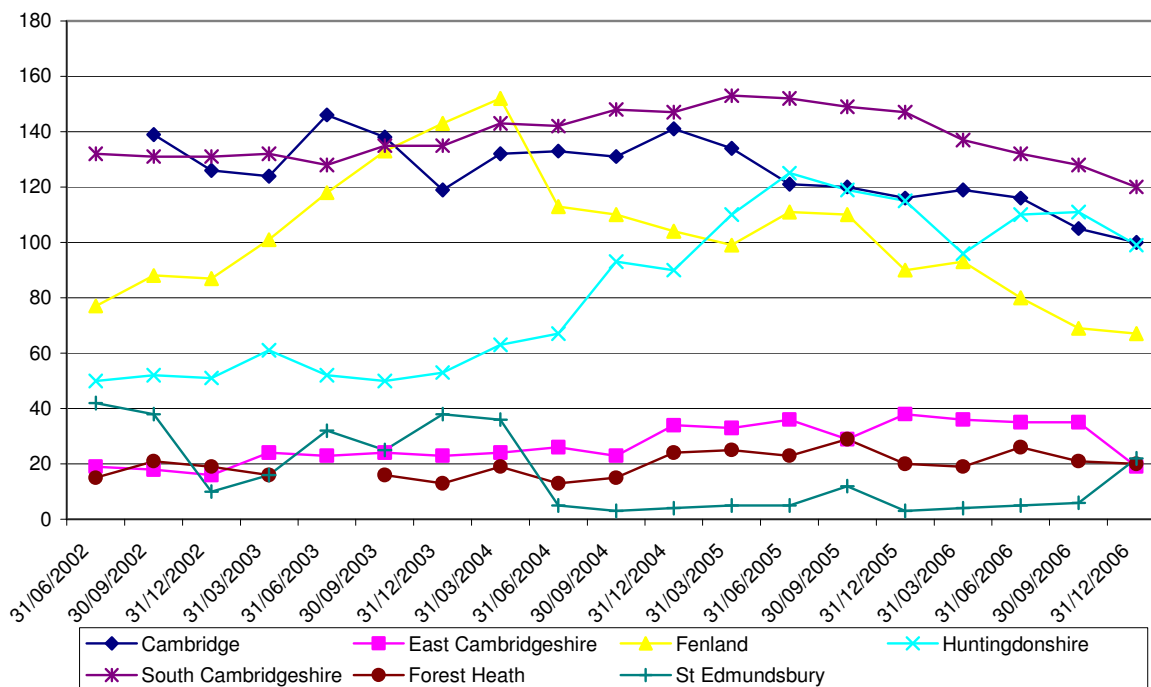
Table 4 provides details of the numbers of people in temporary accommodation at 31 March each year. The figures given in this table only provide a snapshot view of the end of each quarter rather than a headcount for the whole period. Also, counting those in temporary accommodation as well as homeless acceptances would lead to double counting some households. Appendix 2 provides further information for the other quarters.

Table 4: Total Households in Temporary Accommodation, at 31 Dec 2002 to 2006

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Cambridge	126	119	141	116	100
East Cambridgeshire	16	23	34	38	19
Fenland	87	143	104	90	67
Huntingdonshire	51	53	90	115	99
South Cambridgeshire	131	135	147	147	120
Forest Heath	19	13	24	20	20
St Edmundsbury	10	38	4	3	22
Sub-Region	440	524	544	529	447

Source: P1E Returns

Fig 2: Households in Temporary Accommodation, end of quarters Jun 02³ to Dec 06



Source: P1E Returns

East Cambridgeshire, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have the lowest numbers of households in temporary accommodation. Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire have the highest, but these numbers have fallen between 2002 and 2006. Both districts (and

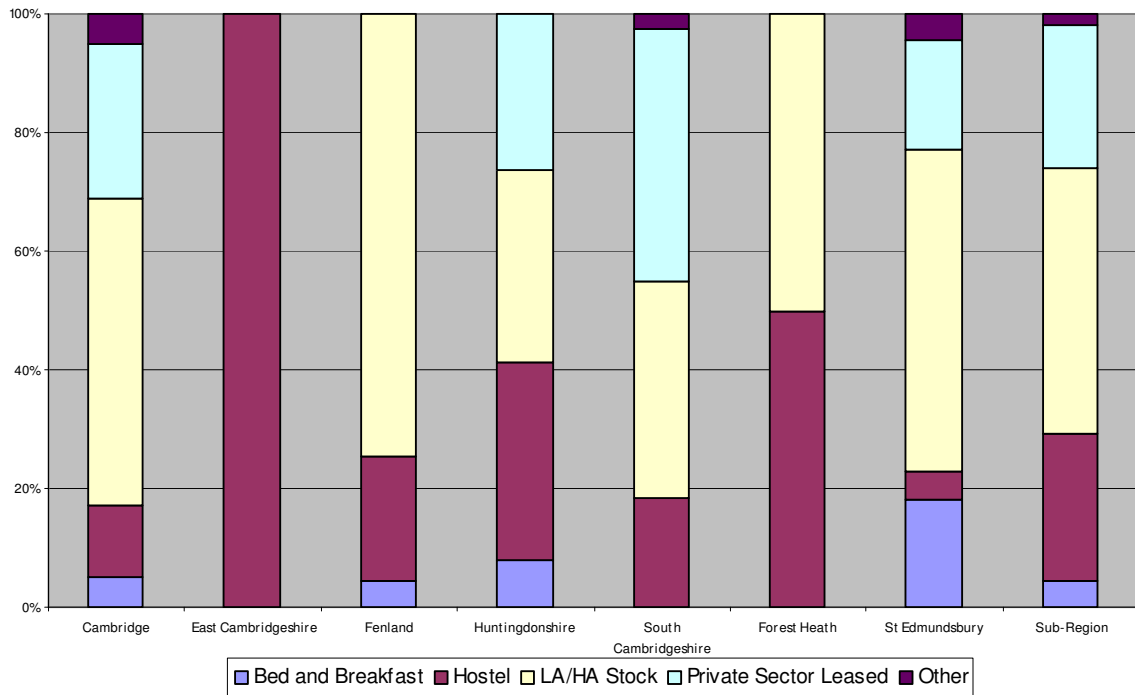
³ There is insufficient data available before this date

Huntingdonshire since 2005) have contracted a housing association to provide quality private sector houses for homeless families as a more permanent solution to their housing needs. This is not counted as temporary accommodation within the P1E form.

Households living in temporary accommodation in Fenland rose between mid 2002 and 2004, but have fallen since. This increase was due to a major works programme to council housing, which meant there were fewer properties available for new lettings to people in hostel and B&B accommodation. Since 31st March 2004, the number of households in temporary accommodation has fallen to below the numbers in 2002.⁴

The graph above also shows an increase in houses in temporary accommodation in Huntingdonshire. In order to minimise length of stay of families with children in B&B and meet the government's target for B&B usage Huntingdonshire increased its number of self-contained temporary accommodation units, primarily by introducing a private sector leasing scheme with King Street Housing Association. This provides good quality self contained accommodation where households tend to remain for between 6 to 18 months until more permanent housing can be identified. There has, nevertheless, been a rise in the number of households in temporary housing from 50 at the end of June 2002, to a peak of 125 in the middle of 2005, to 99 at the end of 2006.

Fig 3: Temporary Accommodation by type, Jan to Mar 2006



There are low numbers of households in Bed and Breakfast style accommodation compared to other types of temporary accommodation across the sub-region. Huntingdonshire has the highest number of households in temporary accommodation across the period as a whole. The number of people in B&B accommodation in Cambridge City has fallen. In most of the other areas, numbers in B&B have accounted for less than 10% for the most part and some districts have had no households in B&B for long periods.

⁴ Fenland District Council Homelessness Strategy, 2003-08

RSL and local authority stock used as temporary housing has increased in Cambridge, Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire and Forest Heath. This is social rented housing let to people awaiting a homelessness decision or an offer of permanent accommodation, who are not secure tenants but live in the dwelling. This is the most common sort of temporary accommodation in Fenland. South Cambridgeshire uses a lot of private sector leased temporary accommodation compared to the other districts, but the number has fallen over the past year in this South Cambridgeshire and in Cambridge City, although it is increasing in Huntingdonshire.

“Other” accommodation includes private sector landlords and temporary structures such as park homes. This was not used at all in Huntingdonshire and Fenland during the period, whereas South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City each have about 5 households at the end of each quarter in this type of accommodation. East Cambridgeshire and Forest Heath have the highest percentages of households in hostel style accommodation.

As well as people in temporary accommodation, there are also people who are “homeless at home” – i.e. they are able to stay where they are for the time being, but are not securely housed in the long term. These are not counted as households in temporary accommodation on the P1E returns, although numbers are gathered on the issue in the P1E form. These are useful to be aware of because there are many reasons why someone might be classed homeless at home, including pressures such as overcrowding, accommodation being unsuitable for the needs of the household and shorthold tenancies coming to an end.

They are owed a main homelessness duty but arrangements have been made for them to remain in their existing accommodation for the immediate future.

Table 5: “Homeless at Home”

	31/06/2002	30/09/2002	31/12/2002	31/03/2003	31/06/2003	30/09/2003	31/12/2003	31/03/2004	31/06/2004	30/09/2004	31/12/2004	31/03/2005	31/06/2005	30/09/2005	31/12/2005	31/03/2006	31/06/2006	30/09/2006	31/12/2006
Cambridge	N/A	7	17	10	4	10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	33	N/A	6	16	N/A	N/A	4	N/A	3
East Cambridgeshire	41	25	20	27	30	32	22	33	29	68	58	63	48	52	55	74	63	88	47
Fenland	13	19	9	5	8	2	2	7	19	14	2	16	10	13	4	8	9	16	15
Huntingdonshire	2	4	0	4	1	0	27	39	45	46	41	25	37	27	25	9	13	16	6
South Cambridgeshire	17	11	8	4	2	9	5	8	5	3	8	8	9	14	12	10	7	6	5
Forest Heath	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	1	1	1	2	5	5	2	1	0	0	2
St Edmundsbury	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	1	0
Sub-Region	73	66	54	50	45	53	186	87	100	133	143	114	115	127	102	102	97	127	78

Source: P1E returns

The two Suffolk districts show low numbers of people being accepted as “Homeless at Home.” Fenland and South Cambridgeshire also had quite low numbers, which were consistent over the period. East Cambridgeshire has the largest number of “homeless at home” households and the number has increased during the period. Some of the data for this category is missing for Cambridge City. The number of households in this situation is important because it demonstrates a need in the longer term even if they are able to stay put in the shorter term.

Table 6: Priority homeless in temporary accommodation at the end of each year

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	Average
Cambridge	121	84	140	130	108	119	117
East Cambridgeshire	50	55	52	57	62	36	52
Fenland	83	85	106	19	101	93	81
Forest Heath	14	12	17	19	25	19	18
Huntingdonshire	31	55	55	74	118	96	72
South Cambridgeshire	152	148	132	143	153	137	144
St Edmundsbury	36	0	0	0	0	4	7

Source: HSSA Section E, question 2. Homeless households in priority need in temporary accommodation at 31st March

18.4 Homelessness and the Housing Needs Register

There has been a decrease in the percentage of homeless households on the housing needs register in most districts in the sub-region. There has been a slight increase in Huntingdonshire. East Cambridgeshire has the highest proportion of households accepted as homeless on the housing needs register (15-19%). St Edmundsbury (1-8%) and Cambridge City (3-7%) have the smallest. Table 7 includes people accepted as homeless and in temporary accommodation or who are homeless at home.

Table 7: Households on Housing Needs Register, 2001-06

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Cambridge	4,472	2,860	3,218	3,724	4,251	4,743
East Cambridgeshire	1,245	1,400	1,538	1,737	1,477	1,442
Fenland	1,293	1,185	1,248	1,439	2,226	2,032
Huntingdonshire	3,416	2,724	2,910	2,772	2,887	2,425
South Cambridgeshire	1,500	1,733	2,207	2,553	3,538	4,155
Forest Heath	973	979	1,063	1,113	1,221	1,505
St Edmundsbury	2,122	2,230	2,813	3,104	4,118	4,673
Sub-region	15,021	13,111	14,997	16,442	19,718	20,975

Source: HSSA

Table 8: All households accepted as homeless as % of housing needs register, 2001-06

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Cambridge	6%	No data	11%	7%	5%	3%
East Cambridgeshire	19%	14%	14%	14%	16%	15%
Fenland	12%	12%	14%	10%	6%	9%
Huntingdonshire	9%	12%	8%	13%	11%	10%
South Cambridgeshire	14%	10%	11%	7%	6%	3%
Forest Heath	No data	11%	No data	5%	9%	8%
St Edmundsbury	8%	8%	6%	8%	5%	1%
Sub-Region	9%	9%	9%	9%	7%	5%

Source: HSSA

Table 9: Lettings to Homeless Households in Priority Need, 2001/02-2005/06

		2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Cambridge	LA Lets	107	64	111	181	138	168
	LA Nominations to RSLs	30	16	24	27	29	30
	LA nominations to non-RSL ⁵	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Cambridgeshire	LA Lets	LSVT					
	LA Nominations to RSLs	152	152	167	185	137	101
	LA nominations to non-RSLs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fenland	LA Lets	No Data	9	8	19	17	38
	LA Nominations to RSLs	9	0	3	5	11	8
	LA nominations to non-RSLs	0	0	0	0	0	5
Huntingdonshire	LA Lets	LSVT					
	LA Nominations to RSLs	92	130	154	201	182	199
	LA nominations to non-RSLs	0	0	0	0	0	25
South Cambridgeshire	LA Lets	81	60	62	58	60	47
	LA Nominations to RSLs	26	36	16	17	30	23
	LA nominations to non-RSLs	0	0	0	0	0	10
Forest Heath	LA Lets	8	26	16	15	10	LSVT
	LA Nominations to RSLs	5	6	0	6	13	44
	LA nominations to non-RSLs	0	0	0	0	0	0
St Edmundsbury	LA Lets	54	7	28	LSVT		
	LA Nominations to RSLs	42	3	78	106	134	197
	LA nominations to non-RSLs	0	0	0	0	0	7

Source: HSSA

Because Cambridge, Fenland and South Cambridgeshire still have their own stock, most of the homeless households in these areas go into local authority accommodation. Nominations to non-RSL lets are used in Fenland, Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire and St Edmundsbury. Most areas have seen an increase in the number of lets to homeless households. The exception is East Cambridgeshire, where there has also been a decrease in the number of households accepted as being in priority need (see Table 1).

Table 10: Priority need homeless households housed as % of all housed, 2002-06

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Cambridge	12%	19%	25%	23%	23%
East Cambridgeshire	54%	55%	58%	36%	30%
Fenland	2%	2%	5%	7%	10%
Huntingdonshire	21%	23%	34%	33%	36%
South Cambridgeshire	23%	20%	19%	20%	19%
Forest Heath	9%	8%	38%	35%	21%
St. Edmundsbury	2%	26%	25%	44%	47%
Sub-Region	15%	21%	27%	26%	27%

(Source: HSSA)

⁵ Includes private tenancy schemes and private sector leasing by RSL for short term tenancies

The percentage of priority needs homeless households housed has increased across the sub-region and in most of the districts. There has been a slight decrease in South Cambridgeshire (23% to 19%) and a large drop in East Cambridgeshire, from 54% in 2002 to 30% in 2006. The largest increase has occurred in St Edmundsbury – in 2002 only 2% of the total households housed had been priority need homeless. In 2006, this had increased to 47% - almost half.

18.5 Conclusions

- National policies expanding the definition of priority need homelessness helped lead to an increase in the number of households being accepted as homeless. But due to an emphasis on homelessness prevention there has been a drop in the number accepted over the long term in most areas.
- Households in priority need make up the largest percentage of households accepted as homeless (between 70-76% for the sub-region as a whole). Households are categorised as being in priority need if they include someone who is vulnerable (e.g. children, older people, disabled people). In 2002 this was widened to include people previously over-represented among rough sleepers such as care leavers aged up to 21, ex-servicemen and 16-17 year olds.
- In the sub-region as a whole, households are accepted as homeless represent between 0.3 and 0.5% of the district populations. This figure has been reasonably stable over the last five years. The percentage is slightly higher in Cambridge City and East Cambridgeshire.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation has fallen or stayed roughly the same in all districts except Huntingdonshire. Although the number has increased in this district, there are more, appropriate temporary accommodation solutions available to it now than five years ago.
- The number of people housed temporarily in bed and breakfast accommodation has fallen since 2002 and districts are using a diverse range of temporary accommodation options to avoid its use. Using social rented stock for temporary housing, followed by hostel-type accommodation are the most common types of temporary housing used in the sub-region.
- Households accepted as homeless and in priority need account for between 5-9% of the total housing needs register. Other reasons for being on the register are given in Chapter 17, *Social rented housing* (e.g. overcrowding, properties being unsuitable due to condition, being asked to leave by family or friends etc). Over a quarter (27%) of new social lets in 2006 were to households who were accepted as homeless.
- **®** This report focuses on homeless households in priority need and does not include information about non-priority homeless e.g. single people. This is an area requiring further research in future.

18.6 Summary

This chapter looks at reported formal homeless applications, acceptances by local authorities and subsequent housing outcomes - short and long term - for households accepted as unintentionally homeless. The main findings are:

- Across the sub region the number of decisions made following homeless applications rose from 2001 to 2004 and then fell in 2005/6 to below its 2001 level. The local exceptions to this pattern were St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath where the number of decisions rose slightly between 2001 and 2005/6.

- In most of the sub region the number of priority group households accepted as unintentionally homeless following their applications decreased. The exceptions were Huntingdonshire, St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath.
- In relation to the local population, the percentage of households has fallen across the sub region from 2001 to 2006.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation rose after 2001 but than fell back to broadly the same level by 2006. Alternatives to bed and breakfast, such as private leasing, mean that generally less than 10% are housed in bed and breakfast.
- Homeless households generally account for less than 10% of people on the Housing Needs Register.

Appendix 1 – Summary of District Homelessness Strategies

As part of the 2002 Homeless Act, local authorities were required to carry out a review of homelessness and homeless services in their area and produce a strategy. This appendix provides a summary of the most recent strategy documents.

Some of the action points given are from national targets such as a greater emphasis on preventing homelessness and the elimination of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for households with children except in emergencies and appear in all documents.

Cambridge City - Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008

The City Council's objectives in tackling homelessness are

- Improving the service offered to people presenting as homeless through reviewing methods of assessment and the investigation process, establishing targets, effective monitoring and review systems for decision-making times, reviewing the appeals process and look at alternative options and producing information packs for applicants.
- Reducing the use of Bed & Breakfast temporary accommodation, firstly for families, but also for other clients groups. Actions for this include exploring the use of “homeless at home” and the support this would require, maintaining an effective monitoring system noting reasons for placement, examining the support needs of homeless people and Bed & Breakfast and developing appropriate support packages to support them into other tenancies, reviewing the effectiveness of the Rent Arrears Panel, and providing alternative forms of temporary accommodation e.g. by expanding the rent deposit and private sector leasing schemes, and investigating the need for further hostel accommodation.
- Investigating the current use of temporary accommodation and forecasting future needs by reviewing the current use (number of places annually, type of placements, length of stay, numbers deferred and reasons why, support needs, cost and ability to access for those in low-paid employment) and reviewing tenancy started packs for vulnerable households. Improving information about temporary accommodation by forecasting future needs, developing a database to record monitoring information and agreeing procedures with the PCT to implement systems to make sure notifications of families in temporary accommodation and consistent and reliable.
- Offering good quality permanent accommodation through the development of a choice-based letting policy, providing a move-on system from specialist projects. Working with RSLs on nomination agreements and private sector landlords to develop a private sector leasing scheme and temporary market housing lets.
- Improving homelessness prevention services by delivering a Single Homeless and Rough Sleepers Action Plan (see below), reviewing the advice service and liaising regularly with organisations such as CAB, CIAC etc., developing a housing advice website and identifying those at risk of homelessness.
- Meeting specified client group needs:
 - Vulnerable young people and care leavers by taking information into schools, intervention such as family mediation and a “crash pad” bed space, providing appropriate temporary accommodation and support in a crisis and having a specific project for vulnerable young homeless people.

- Children and families by improving data collection and working with other agencies such as social services and in implementing the Intentionally Homeless families protocol.
 - Rough sleepers (see below)
 - People who are homeless for health reasons (mental, physical and substance misuse). The action points for this group are to agree a common system of care-planning and co-ordination with other agencies, ensuring a range of treatment interventions are available (e.g. the walk-in health centre on Newmarket Road) and that suitable accommodation options exist including dry/drug free support treatment needs and developing a training strategy for partner agencies to improve service delivery.
 - Offender and ex-offenders by working with other agencies to provide housing advice for people whilst still in prison and establishing links and protocols with the Probation Service to examine how to meet the needs of offenders and ex-offenders.
 - Ethnic Minorities and Asylum Seekers through evaluating access to services and services and homelessness prevention advice and review the profile of applicants from ethnic groups and asylum seekers.
 - People fleeing domestic violence by review the City's domestic violence strategy, supporting women to secure rights to occupy their homes and providing additional move-accommodation from the refuge.
- Increasing the involvement of homeless people in service provision by undertaking continuous consultation with homeless households.
 - Ensuring links to other relevant strategies and initiatives, such as housing, education, crime and disorder, alcohol and drugs, and child protection policies. This objective also includes working with other local authorities and ensuring the funding opportunities are available and accessed.

Cambridge City - Single Homeless and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2006-09

This strategy has 8 objectives.

- Maintain the target of reducing rough sleepers by relieving the pressures of inward migration through the development of a Reconnections Policy, reshaping emergency bed space provision to deliver an assessment centre model, and reassessing systems for initial user assessment, and increasing move-on opportunities for hostel clients.
- Improving rehab outcomes for drug and alcohol users by launching a drugs protocol for Cambridge, facilitating access to structured day care facilities for clients, and conducting a review of the Red Phoenix Unit, targeted work with street drinkers to re-evaluate the need for a wet centre, developing planned housing pathways for clients leaving rehabilitation services and enhancing relationships between the City Council, partner agencies and substance misuse services.
- Improving the quality of services available to single homeless people and rough sleepers in Cambridge by improving communication and understanding between agencies, working with Supporting People to drive up standards and improving standards at the larger hostels.
- Increasing user involvement through consultation and improving quality of services based on input from service users.

- Tackling Anti-social behaviour through the implementation of the Street Life Action plan, reviewing the target group for larger hostels and in particular the current measures in tackling drug-related activity in and around them.
- Implementing effective homelessness prevention strategies such as choice-based lettings, family mediation and reconciliation services, and developing the Tenants at Risk Forum and the role of the Young person's Advice and Advocacy worker, hospital discharge and prison release procedures. This also includes tackling repeat applications by developing training flats for single homeless and rough sleepers.
- Developing new services and meeting health needs such as resettlement services for older single homeless people, counselling services and exploring the need to develop services for Sex Workers, consolidating the Access Surgery Service and improving levels of nutrition through the development of a food and health education programme.
- Improving the status confidence and skills of single homeless people through the implementation of a Meaningful Activity Action Plan.

East Cambridgeshire Homelessness Strategy 2003-08

East Cambridgeshire District Council aims to

- Prevent homelessness by providing advice on housing options, helping people to remain in their homes, through mediation, debt counselling, liaison with landlords, floating support service and support for a Home Improvement Agency. Tackling the problem of repeat homelessness through monitoring number of repeat applications and why some homeless households are unable to sustain tenancies.
- Ensure temporary accommodation is safe, of a good quality and available in suitable locations. The strategy highlights the Central government target of eliminating the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for households with children. It also states that victims of domestic violence should be given a choice of temporary accommodation to ensure their safety, which might include moving outside the district. Young people who become homeless should be housed in appropriate supported housing, such as the Cambridge Housing Society Young Persons Project in Ely, or other similar hostels outside the district in Cambridge and Newmarket). Satisfaction of hostel residents is to be monitored.
- Ensure homeless people whom the council has a duty to house are suitably housed in permanent accommodation as quickly as possible. This is to be achieved by working with the Common Housing Partnership to try to house homeless households within six months of their application being accepted as having a statutory duty, and by encouraging housing associations to make the best use of their stock.

Fenland Homelessness Strategy, 2003-08

The action points in the Fenland District council homelessness strategy are

- Preventing homelessness by assessing the value of a mediation service in reducing the number of parental evictions, improving contact with RSLs when a possession order is obtained against a tenant, and enhancing the value of housing aid and advice.
- Drawing up costed proposals for further direct access hostel accommodation, researching best practice for liaising with private landlords, reviewing the Rent Deposit Scheme for helping homeless people find accommodation in the private rented sector, drawing up a targeted Empty Homes strategy, monitoring the impact of

the revised applications policy on lettings to homeless households and reviewing the use of Council nomination rights to RSL

There is also a separate set of action points relating to specific vulnerable groups:

Households with young children	Eliminating the use of Bed and Breakfast temporary accommodation for families with children except for short periods in crisis by 2004.
Young people	Measure the need for additional long term housing for young people, both supported and general. Optimising joint working between housing, social services and Connexions.
Young Lone Parents	Evaluate the option of introducing a floating support service specifically for young lone parents Establish liaison with Job Centre Lone Parent Advisers
Older People	Ensure that meeting housing needs is included in the older persons' strategy.
People with Mental Health Problems	Monitor the number of homeless clients with mental health problems in relation to the available floating support for this group, and monitor the effectiveness of floating support in helping people to maintain their tenancies.
BME groups	Agree the best way of avoiding homelessness among travellers with no legal site access for their caravans. Ensure that Equal opportunities policies are implemented and updated.
People fleeing domestic violence	Work with the Fenland Domestic Violence Forum to monitor the possible need for future extension of support services for victims of domestic violence
Rough Sleepers	Research the extent of rough sleeping in the district
People leaving institutions	Agree procedures with local hospital to warn the local homelessness team about when a homeless person is being discharged. Ensure effective joint working with relevant agencies to ensure support services match the need of homeless offenders and ex-offenders. Ensure that support services meet the needs of clients with multiple support needs
People who misuse drugs and alcohol	Agree joint procedures and training between relevant agencies governing the management of drug misuse issues in relation to housing

Huntingdonshire Homelessness Strategy 2006 – 2008

The main aims of the district strategy are:

- Preventing homelessness by maintaining households in their current home wherever possible.
- Providing a range of accessible and affordable housing options across all tenures, through a Homechoice scheme, private sector properties available through housing association partners at market and sub-market rents, low cost home ownership opportunities and the sub-regional choice based lettings scheme.
- Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation, through conversion of self-contained temporary properties into permanent homes and through “qualifying offers” i.e. using private sector tenancies to find settled homes for households already accepted as homeless.
- Improving performance management, organisational efficiency and cross boundary collaboration. The district council makes use of customer satisfaction feedback surveys, and is involved in partnership work with other organisations such as the police and fire services, Supporting People and other districts.

South Cambridgeshire Homelessness Strategy, 2003-2008

- Preventing homelessness by ensuring that housing advice services are accessible, offering clear and effective advice of housing and related issues and providing support for people to stay in their homes.
- Improving existing services, such as ensuring high levels of satisfaction with housing advice and homelessness services, ensuring that specialist support services are available for particular groups, providing appropriate advice and assistance for non-priority/ intentionally homeless households, and providing thorough, consistent and timely assessments and decisions for applicants.
- Offering suitable temporary accommodation, eliminating the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for families by 2004 except for in emergencies and ensuring high customer satisfaction levels with temporary accommodation.
- Improving access to permanent accommodation by offering settled housing options as quickly as possible, increasing choice for homeless applicants and increasing the supply of affordable housing.
- Tackling private sector issues by working with landlord to increase housing options for homeless people in the private sector, implementing an effective Empty Homes strategy and promoting the availability of low cost home ownership schemes.

Forest Heath Draft Homelessness Strategy 2007-2010

Forest Heath District council has two aims in its draft strategy: Reducing homelessness to include reducing numbers in temporary accommodation, and improving the quality of available temporary accommodation. These aims will be achieved by

- Establishing a “One-stop shop” for housing advice/options/register and homelessness service; reviewing and evaluating current homelessness prevention initiatives; working with partner agencies to establish protocols aimed to prevent homelessness and ensure effective early intervention; providing homelessness options awareness training; continuing to develop and enable an affordable housing programme (which could include the leasing off or disposal of surplus temporary accommodation units); improving accessibility to the Homelessness Prevention service and further investigating and developing prevention initiatives.
- Temporary accommodation improvements will include replacing the old hostel in Newmarket with new temporary accommodation, refurbishing The Elms in Brandon and providing temporary accommodation in Mildenhall to ensure that all three major population centres in the district are covered. The management of Council-owned temporary accommodation will be contract out to allow the Homelessness Prevention team to concentrate on its core activities

St Edmundsbury Homelessness Strategy 2003-07

The aims of the strategy are

- To increase the provision of accommodation by looking at “move-on” from temporary accommodation, implementing a rent deposit scheme, increasing the supply of general needs accommodation for single people, monitoring nominations of homeless households to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation to fulfill needs, and developing a private sector landlords forum.
- To provide support services by considering increasing floating support, setting up a mediation service, reviewing housing advice within the Borough and the role of the CAB, and providing an information pack to homeless applicants.

- To work in partnership by setting up a multi-agency Homeless Forum & Housing Advice Network for information sharing, ensure a Joint Protocol for homeless 16 and 17 year olds, review out of hours arrangements with social care, and review current referral systems for homeless people.
- To improve monitoring by exploring IT use to improve recording of cases, reviewing the housing register points system and reviewing staffing structure to see if additional staff are required.
- To work in schools to provide housing education.

Appendix 2: Background figures

Homelessness decisions by type, 2000/01-2005/06⁶

		Accepted as being homeless and in priority need	Eligible, homeless and in priority need but intentionally so	Eligible, homeless but not in priority need	Eligible but not homeless	Total Decisions
Cambridge City	2000/01	153	16	14	20	203
	2001/02	203	22	27	23	275
	2002/03	88	7	13	16	124
	2003/04	261	31	35	35	362
	2004/05	204	18	15	21	258
	2005/06	179	12	4	13	208
	2006/07	98	10	3	2	113
East Cambridgeshire	2000/01	154	2	1	3	160
	2001/02	207	10	6	7	230
	2002/03	150	14	6	14	184
	2003/04	185	21	5	18	229
	2004/05	192	16	8	33	249
	2005/06	139	21	11	54	225
	2006/07	118	16	14	26	174
Fenland	2000/01	87	15	3	43	148
	2001/02	107	17	3	33	160
	2002/03	102	10	3	31	146
	2003/04	122	11	0	27	160
	2004/05	103	13	2	23	141
	2005/06	82	34	4	26	146
	2006/07	100	8	4	31	143
Huntingdonshire	2000/01	119	14	6	49	188
	2001/02	192	16	6	90	304
	2002/03	189	12	6	73	280
	2003/04	233	18	2	38	291
	2004/05	254	27	6	74	361
	2005/06	207	17	4	64	292
	2006/07	132	11	5	45	193
South Cambridgeshire	2000/01	97	8	9	15	129
	2001/02	148	9	7	39	203
	2002/03	152	6	30	56	244
	2003/04	129	19	18	28	194
	2004/05	116	16	14	34	180
	2005/06	122	9	18	21	170
	2006/07	82	4	10	20	116
Forest Heath	2000/01	34	3	7	25	69
	2001/02	37	6	7	53	103
	2002/03	58	3	6	37	104
	2003/04	48	2	7	12	69
	2004/05	55	0	1	9	65
	2005/06	55	8	12	34	109

⁶ Figures in grey are not complete. There is no data available for any of the districts for July to Sept 2000, for Cambridge City in Apr to June and July to Sept 2002, and for Forest Heath for April to June in 2001 and 2003. Figures for Jan to Mar 2007 are not yet available

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		Accepted as being homeless and in priority need	Eligible, homeless and in priority need but intentionally so	Eligible, homeless but not in priority need	Eligible but not homeless	Total Decisions
	2006/07	47	2	5	35	89
St Edmundsbury	2000/01	87	1	6	9	103
	2001/02	120	4	13	14	151
	2002/03	146	14	8	14	182
	2003/04	141	8	12	7	168
	2004/05	188	33	15	15	251
	2005/06	139	9	4	3	155
	2006/07	25	13	4	1	43
Sub-Region	2000/01	731	59	46	164	1000
	2001/02	1014	84	69	259	1426
	2002/03	885	66	72	241	1264
	2003/04	1119	110	79	165	1473
	2004/05	1112	123	61	209	1505
	2005/06	923	110	57	215	1305
	2006/07	602	64	45	160	871

Source: P1E Returns

Temporary Accommodation by type, 31 June 2002 to 31 Dec 2006

		31/06/02	30/09/02	31/12/02	31/03/03	31/06/03	30/09/03	31/12/03	31/03/04	31/06/04	30/09/04	31/12/04	31/03/05	31/06/05	30/09/05	31/12/05	31/03/06	31/06/06	30/09/06	31/12/06
Cambridge	Bed & Breakfast		27	20	20	42	31	21	9	6	0	2	6	9	6	9	8	6	8	5
	Hostels		30	24	24	26	19	20	22	20	23	26	26	22	22	17	18	19	10	12
	LA/HA Stock		34	36	30	32	43	27	43	46	48	54	47	42	42	45	53	54	53	52
	Private Sector Leased		45	43	48	44	43	46	53	53	53	52	48	42	44	39	34	32	29	26
	Other		3	3	2	2	2	5	5	8	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	5	5	5
	Total Temporary Accommodation		139	126	124	146	138	119	132	133	131	141	134	121	120	116	119	116	105	100
East Cambridgeshire	Bed & Breakfast	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	6	4	7	3	6	3	2	1	0
	Hostels	0	18	16	24	22	23	23	24	24	22	28	29	29	26	32	33	32	33	19
	LA/HA Stock	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Private Sector Leased	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Other	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
	Total Temporary Accommodation	19	18	16	24	23	24	23	24	26	23	34	33	36	29	38	36	35	35	19
Fenland	Bed & Breakfast	0	4	4	5	1	1	1	3	3	0	0	2	7	6	0	8	0	4	3
	Hostels	4	6	4	10	11	6	10	9	9	11	7	8	7	10	9	11	10	13	14
	LA/HA Stock	73	78	79	86	106	126	132	136	101	99	97	89	97	94	81	74	70	52	50
	Private Sector Leased	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Temporary Accommodation	77	88	87	101	118	133	143	152	113	110	104	99	111	110	90	93	80	69	67
Huntingdonshire	Bed & Breakfast	17	22	15	0	16	16	8	10	11	22	6	16	24	17	11	12	20	11	8
	Hostels	24	18	21	21	19	13	20	22	22	29	33	38	41	40	34	21	27	33	33
	LA/HA Stock	9	12	15	17	17	18	18	31	34	27	33	37	40	38	43	38	37	39	32
	Private Sector Leased	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	0	0	15	18	19	20	24	27	25	26	28	26
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Temporary Accommodation	50	52	51	38	52	50	53	63	67	93	90	110	125	119	115	96	110	111	99

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		31/05/02	30/09/02	31/12/02	31/03/03	31/06/03	30/09/03	31/12/03	31/03/04	31/06/04	30/09/04	31/12/04	31/03/05	31/06/05	30/09/05	31/12/05	31/03/06	31/06/06	30/09/06	31/12/06
South Cambridgeshire	Bed & Breakfast	3	3	3	23	3	7	1	0	2	3	4	3	3	8	0	0	1	1	0
	Hostels	25	25	26	27	27	27	27	26	25	24	25	27	26	26	25	24	27	26	22
	LA/HA Stock	18	17	15	15	15	17	22	27	27	27	24	26	25	26	35	39	38	42	44
	Private Sector Leased	83	82	82	82	80	80	82	85	83	86	85	86	87	82	82	71	63	56	51
	Other	3	4	5	2	3	4	3	5	5	8	9	11	11	7	5	3	3	3	3
	Total Temporary Accommodation	132	131	131	149	128	135	135	143	142	148	147	153	152	149	147	137	132	128	120
Forest Heath	Bed & Breakfast	0	0	0	6		0	0	1	0	3	0	1	1	4	0	2	0	0	0
	Hostels	15	17	14	15		14	13	18	13	8	13	13	15	15	13	10	14	12	10
	LA/HA Stock	0	1	3	1		2	0	0	0	1	11	11	7	10	7	7	12	9	10
	Private Sector Leased	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	3	2	0		0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Temporary Accommodation	15	21	19	22	0	16	13	19	13	15	24	25	23	29	20	19	26	21	20
St Edmundsbury	Bed & Breakfast	0	0	0	0	3	1	3	3	4	3	4	5	5	12	3	4	4	1	4
	Hostels	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	LA/HA Stock	42	33	6	15	0	0	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	12
	Private Sector Leased	0	5	4	1	4	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4
	Other	0	0	0	0	25	23	4	33	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Total Temporary Accommodation	42	38	10	16	32	25	38	36	5	3	4	5	5	12	3	4	5	6	22
Sub-Region	Bed & Breakfast	21	56	42	54	66	57	34	26	28	31	22	37	56	56	29	37	33	26	20
	Hostels	68	114	105	121	105	102	113	121	113	117	132	141	140	139	130	117	129	127	111
	LA/HA Stock	142	175	154	164	170	206	220	237	208	202	219	210	211	210	211	211	211	197	200
	Private Sector Leased	83	132	129	131	128	127	145	142	136	154	155	153	149	150	148	130	122	115	107
	Other	21	10	10	4	30	29	12	43	14	19	16	18	17	13	11	9	9	10	9
	Total Temporary Accommodation	335	487	440	474	499	521	524	569	499	523	544	559	573	568	529	504	504	475	447

Source: P1E Returns

Appendix 3 – a summary of the definition of statutory homelessness

Councils offer advice on any help you may receive under the homelessness legislation. This legislation tells the Council what level of help should be offered to households in different situations. To be able to tell you what level of help you may be offered under this legislation the Council will need to investigate and have proof of the following:

- That you are homeless or threatened with homelessness; and
- That you are eligible for assistance; and
- That you have a priority need; and
- That you did not become homeless intentionally; and
- That you have a local connection with the district.

Who is homeless?

Someone may be homeless if:

- They have nowhere to live in the UK or anywhere else in the world; or
- They are staying somewhere where they have no legal right to remain; or
- They have a home but are afraid of violence, abuse, harassment or threats.

Who is eligible for assistance?

This relates to people who may not be eligible for help with housing in the UK. Most people will be eligible but you may not be eligible if:

- You are subject to immigration control and have limited rights to remain in the UK; or
- You are an asylum seeker; or
- You are not subject to immigration control but you have recently returned from abroad to live in the UK. This can still apply to you if you are a British citizen who has lived abroad for some time.

The Council will discuss this with you in more detail if this is likely to apply to you.

Who has a Priority Need?

You have a priority need if:

- You have dependent children living with you as part of your household; or
- You are a pregnant woman or have a pregnant woman living with you in your household; or
- You have become homeless because of a fire, flood or other emergency; or
- You are 16 or 17 years old and social services does not have responsibility for you; or
- You are aged 18 to 20 and used to be in care; or
- You are assessed as being vulnerable because you are less able to find and keep accommodation of your own.

If you do not have an obvious priority need, the Council will discuss with you what may make someone vulnerable and assess whether this applies to you.

Who is intentionally homeless?

Someone is considered to have made themselves homeless intentionally if they did something (such as act in an anti-social way), or failed to do something (such as not pay their rent), that resulted in them losing their home.

If you are in priority need, but also became homeless intentionally, the Council will not have a responsibility to offer you help with housing. The Council will though give you advice to help you find accommodation.

Who has a local connection?

You have a 'local connection' if:

- You have lived in the district for a certain amount of time
- You have a permanent job in the district
- Certain members of your family have resided in the district for a specified length of time
- You have a local connection for another special reason.

If you have a priority need, are not intentionally homeless and do not have a local connection, you will usually be referred to a Council in an area where you do have a local connection. The Council will ask that authority to find accommodation for you.