

Homelessness

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Chapter 18. Homelessness

18.1 Summary

- Between 2004 and 2008 the number of households presenting as homeless decreased, but between 2008 and 2009, there was a slight increase coinciding with the “credit crunch”.
- Of the households presenting as homeless, 71% are accepted as homeless and in priority need.
- In the sub-region as a whole, households accepted as homeless represented between 0.18 and 0.31% of the total number of households in each district in 2008/9.
- 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.
- Households accepted as homeless and in priority need account for between 3-10% of the total housing needs register.
- This chapter focuses mainly on statutory homelessness. In 2009, Cambridgeshire NHS produced a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Homelessness and those at risk of homelessness which contains a range of information on non-statutory homeless. A link to this document is included in Appendix 1

18.2 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.

Appendix 1 provides links to the most recent homelessness strategy documents of each district council, and to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Homelessness and those at risk of Homelessness.

18.3 Homelessness decisions

Table 1. Total Decisions by 2001/2 to 2008/9

	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
Cambridge City	275	176	362	258	208	156	159	167
East Cambridgeshire	230	184	229	249	225	221	132	115
Fenland	160	146	160	141	146	190	192	158
Huntingdonshire	304	280	291	361	292	251	220	262
South Cambridgeshire	203	244	194	180	170	128	124	128
Forest Heath	103	104	85	65	109	105	90	86
St Edmundsbury	151	182	168	251	155	52	56	175
Sub-Region	1,426	1,264	1,473	1,505	1,305	1,103	973	1,091

Source: P1E returns

In Table 1, figures in grey represent incomplete data. Numbers of decisions peaked in 2004/5 and fell between 2005 and 2008. There has been a slight increase in the last year in the sub-region as a whole. The largest increase has been in St Edmundsbury, and Huntingdonshire has had the second largest rise. In East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and Forest Heath, the total number of decisions has decreased.

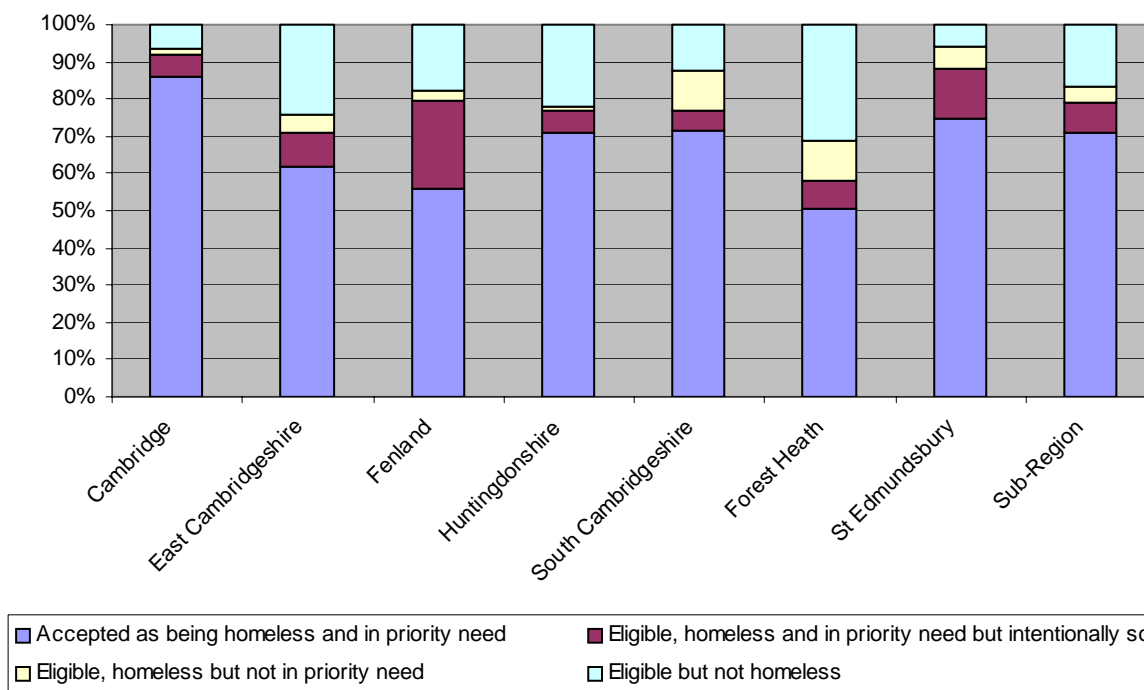
In 2002, the Homelessness Act introduced new categories of priority need, which may have affected the overall number of decisions in the following year. Nationally, homelessness peaked in 2004, so the areas where this occurred locally may have been following the national trend. As well as widening the 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.

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.

Fig 1 shows a breakdown of the outcomes of the decisions made in 2008/9. Appendix 2 provides a more detailed breakdown of decisions made. In all districts, households accepted as being in priority need¹ make up the largest portion of those accepted as homeless. Overall, 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. In Cambridge City and St Edmundsbury, the second largest category is "homeless and in priority need, but intentionally so".

¹ Priority need and households in temporary accommodation are necessary pieces of information for the Housing Market Assessment. This is most odd as a footnote.

Fig 1 Homelessness decisions by type, 2008/9



Source: P1E Returns

Table 2 looks at the number of households accepted as homeless, in priority need and unintentionally homeless between 2001/02 and 2008/09 to show the trend for each district and across the sub-region.

Table 2. Households Accepted as Homeless, 2001/02 to 2008/09

	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
Cambridge	203	130	261	204	179	129	138	140
East Cambridgeshire	207	150	185	192	139	152	87	73
Fenland	107	102	122	103	82	131	108	83
Huntingdonshire	192	251	233	254	207	160	146	162
South Cambridgeshire	148	103	129	116	122	87	101	83
Forest Heath	43	45	57	55	55	57	56	46
St Edmundsbury	120	146	141	188	139	29	35	128
Sub-Region	1,020	927	1,128	1,112	923	745	671	715

Source: P1E Returns

The number of households accepted as in priority need decreased in all districts except for Fenland and Forest Heath between 2001/2 and 2007/8. In the last year, there has been a slight increase. To help compare these figures, Table 3 shows the number of priority homeless as a percentage of the total number of households in each district.

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

	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
Cambridge	0.47%	0.30%	0.60%	0.47%	0.41%	0.29%	0.30%	0.31%
East Cambridgeshire	0.68%	0.48%	0.59%	0.60%	0.43%	0.46%	0.26%	0.22%
Fenland	0.30%	0.28%	0.33%	0.27%	0.22%	0.34%	0.27%	0.21%
Huntingdonshire	0.30%	0.39%	0.36%	0.39%	0.31%	0.24%	0.21%	0.23%
South Cambridgeshire	0.28%	0.19%	0.24%	0.21%	0.22%	0.15%	0.17%	0.15%
Forest Heath	0.19%	0.19%	0.24%	0.22%	0.21%	0.22%	0.21%	0.18%
St Edmundsbury	0.29%	0.36%	0.34%	0.45%	0.32%	0.07%	0.08%	0.30%
Sub-Region	0.35%	0.32%	0.38%	0.37%	0.30%	0.24%	0.21%	0.23%

Source: P1E Returns, CCCRG², CLG

In 2001/2, some 0.35% of households across the sub-region as a whole were homeless. This was significantly higher in East Cambridgeshire (0.68%), and Cambridge City. In 2008/9 in the sub-region as a whole, 0.23% of households were accepted as homeless and in priority need.

18.4 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 Mar 2003 to 2009

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Average
Cambridge	124	132	134	119	109	108	89	116
East Cambridgeshire	24	24	33	36	28	23	17	26
Fenland	101	152	99	93	50	23	19	77
Huntingdonshire	61	63	110	96	93	88	61	82
South Cambridgeshire	132	143	153	137	112	57	45	111
Forest Heath	16	19	25	19	17	16	11	18
St Edmundsbury	16	36	5	4	10	18	5	13
Sub-Region	474	569	559	504	419	333	247	444

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 on average, but these numbers have fallen, particularly in South Cambridgeshire and in 2008 and 2009 there were more people in temporary accommodation in Huntingdonshire. Both districts (and 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 in the first year, but have fallen since. This increase was due to a major works programme to council housing, which

² Number of households based on CLG estimates

meant there were fewer properties available for new lettings to people in hostel and B&B accommodation. The number has fallen since the end of March 2004.³

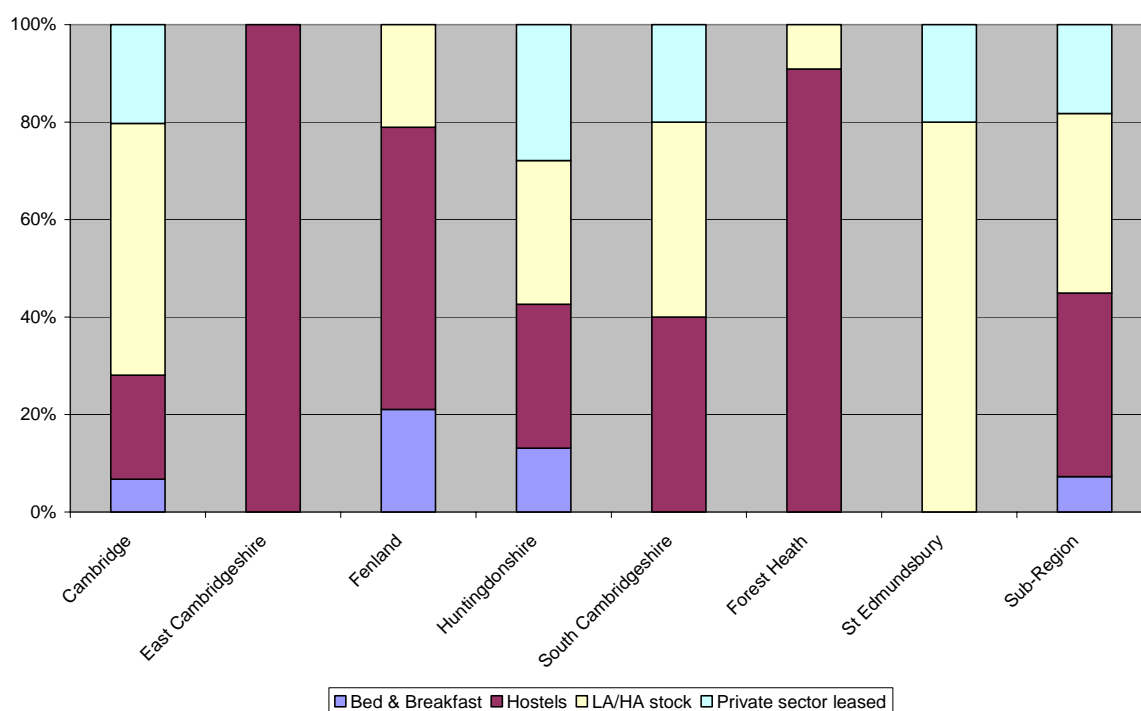
At the end of March 2009, in the sub-region as a whole less than a tenth of households in temporary accommodation were in B&B accommodation.

Hostels (including women's refuges) were the most widely used type of temporary accommodation in Mar 2008 for the sub-region as a whole, and HA/LA stock is the second most common. 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 type of temporary accommodation is particularly common in St Edmundsbury, Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire.

Cambridge City, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire make use of private sector leasing schemes and in the sub-region as a whole this accounts for nearly 20% of the temporary accommodation

East Cambridgeshire and Forest Heath have the highest percentages of households in hostel style accommodation.

Fig 2 Temporary Accommodation by type, Mar 2009



Source: P1E Returns 31 March 2009

³ Fenland District Council Homelessness Strategy, 2003-08

Table 5. Priority homeless in temporary accommodation at the end of each year

	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
Cambridge	121	84	140	130	108	119	109	108	89
East Cambridgeshire	50	55	52	57	62	36	28	23	17
Fenland	83	85	106	19	101	93	50	23	19
Huntingdonshire	31	55	55	74	118	96	93	88	61
South Cambridgeshire	152	148	132	143	153	137	112	57	45
Forest Heath	14	12	17	19	25	19	17	16	11
St Edmundsbury	36	22	26	36	2	4	10	18	5
Sub-Region	487	461	528	478	569	504	419	333	247

Source: HSSA Section E, question 2. Homeless households in priority need in temporary accommodation at 31st March 2001/02 to 2005/06, P1E from 2006/07 onwards.

18.5 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 and Huntingdonshire have the highest proportion of households accepted as homeless on the housing needs register (5%). South Cambridgeshire and City have the smallest. Table 7 includes people accepted as homeless and in temporary accommodation.

Table 6. Households on Housing Needs Register, 2002 to 2009

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cambridge City	4,472	2,860	3,218	3,724	4,251	4,743	5,214	6,897
East Cambridgeshire	1,245	1,400	1,538	1,737	1,477	1,442	1,479	1,404
Fenland	1,293	1,185	1,248	1,439	2,226	2,032	1,971	2,481
Huntingdonshire	3,416	2,724	2,910	2,772	2,887	2,425	2,139	3,267
South Cambridgeshire	1,500	1,733	2,207	2,553	3,538	4,155	4,661	3,800
Forest Heath	973	979	1,063	1,113	1,221	1,505	1,507	1,346
St Edmundsbury	2,122	2,230	2,813	3,104	4,118	4,673	4,433	5,094
Sub-region	15,021	13,111	14,997	16,442	19,718	20,975	21,404	24,289

Source: HSSA

Table 7. All households accepted as homeless as % of needs register, 2002 to 2009

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cambridge	6%	6%	11%	7%	5%	3%	3%	2%
East Cambridgeshire	18%	13%	15%	14%	15%	15%	9%	5%
Fenland	12%	12%	13%	10%	7%	9%	10%	3%
Huntingdonshire	9%	10%	10%	13%	10%	10%	10%	5%
South Cambridgeshire	14%	14%	9%	7%	5%	3%	3%	2%
Forest Heath	11%	11%	8%	6%	9%	7%	6%	3%
St Edmundsbury	7%	8%	6%	8%	4%	1%	1%	3%
Sub-region	9%	10%	10%	9%	7%	5%	5%	3%

Source: HSSA

Table 8. Lettings to homeless households in priority need, 2000/1 to 2008/9

		2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
Cambridge	LA Lets	107	64	111	181	138	168	116	140	134
	LA Nominations to RSLs	30	16	24	27	29	30	2	17	56
	LA nominations to non-RSL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Cambridgeshire	LA Lets	LSVT								
	LA Nominations to RSLs	152 ⁴	152	167	185	137	101	120	66	94
	LA nominations to non-RSLs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Fenland	LA Lets	No Data	9	8	19	17	38	63	54	LSVT
	LA Nominations to RSLs	9	0	3	5	11	8	58	22	69
	LA nominations to non-RSLs	0	0	0	0	0	5	12	9	0
Huntingdonshire	LA Lets	LSVT								
	LA Nominations to RSLs	92	130	154	201	182	199	123	103	141
	LA nominations to non-RSLs	0	0	0	0	0	25	29	0	0
South Cambridgeshire	LA Lets	81	60	62	58	60	47	62	64	48
	LA Nominations to RSLs	26	36	16	17	30	23	35	38	35
	LA nominations to non-RSLs	0	0	0	0	0	10	5	0	19
Forest Heath	LA Lets	8	26	16	15	10	LSVT			
	LA Nominations to RSLs	5	6	0	6	13	44	44	49	61
	LA nominations to non-RSLs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
St Edmundsbury	LA Lets	54	7	28	LSVT					
	LA Nominations to RSLs	42	3	78	106	134	197	187	133	122
	LA nominations to non-RSLs	0	0	0	0	0	7	22	8	0

Source: HSSA

Because Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire still own their own housing stock, most of the homeless households in these areas go into local authority accommodation. Nominations to non-RSL lets are used in all districts except Cambridge City and Forest Heath.

⁴ Includes private tenancy schemes and private sector leasing by RSLs for short term leasing.

Appendix 1 – Links to district homelessness strategies and JSNA

Cambridge City Council (2009) *Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2009-12* accessed at <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/pdfs/Homelessness%20Strategy%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

Cambridge City Council (2007) *Reconnections Policy* accessed at <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/homeless-people/tackling-rough-sleeping.en> [December 2010]. This page also includes other information on rough sleepers in the City.

Cambridgeshire PCT (2009) *Joint strategic needs assessment for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness* accessed at <http://www.cambridgeshirejsna.org.uk/jsna-topics-published-previously/people-who-are-homeless-or-risk-homelessness>

East Cambridgeshire District Council (2008) *Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2008-11* accessed at http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/housing/homelessness_strategy_and_action_plan_2008_2011_27473.pdf [December 2010]

Fenland District Council (2008) *Homelessness Strategy 2008-11*

Forest Heath District Council (2007) *Homelessness Strategy 2007-10* accessed at <http://www.forest-heath.gov.uk/Housing/Housing+Strategy+and+Development.htm> [December 2010] page also includes links to other strategies.

South Cambridgeshire District Council (2009) *Homelessness Strategy 2008-13* accessed at <http://www.scambs.gov.uk/Housing/StrategyAndDevelopment/Strategies/homelessnessReview.htm> [December 2010] also contains links to Homelessness Review 2008.

St Edmundsbury Borough Council (2008) *Homelessness Strategy 2008-13* accessed at <http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/live/Strategies-policies-and-plans.cfm> [December 2010] also includes links to other strategies.

Appendix 2: Background figures

Table 9. Homelessness decisions by type, 2000/01-2008/09⁵

		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
	2007/08	138	18	1	2	159
	2008/09	140	11	2	14	167
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
	2007/08	87	19	5	21	132
	2008/09	73	10	2	30	115
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
	2007/08	108	23	9	52	192
	2008/09	83	23	2	50	158
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
	2007/08	146	5	4	65	220
	2008/09	162	3	4	93	262
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

⁵ 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

		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
	2005/06	122	9	18	21	170
	2006/07	82	4	10	20	116
	2007/08	101	1	5	17	124
	2008/09	83	2	12	31	128
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
	2006/07	47	2	5	35	89
	2007/08	56	7	1	26	90
	2008/09	46	10	6	24	86
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
	2007/08	35	19	0	2	56
	2008/09	128	25	13	9	175
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
	2007/08	671	92	25	185	973
	2008/09	715	84	41	251	1091

Source: P1E Returns

Table 10. Temporary Accommodation by type, 2002/3 to 2008/9

		Bed & Breakfast	Hostel	LA/HA stock	Private sector leased	Other	Total
Cambridge City	2002/3	20	24	30	48	2	124
	2003/4	9	22	43	53	5	132
	2004/5	6	26	47	48	7	134
	2005/6	8	18	53	34	6	119
	2006/7	13	16	51	24	5	109
	2007/8	13	14	58	18	5	108
	2008/9	6	19	46	18	0	89
East Cambridgeshire	2002/3	0	24	0	0	0	24
	2003/4	0	24	0	0	0	24
	2004/5	4	29	0	0	0	33
	2005/6	3	33	0	0	0	36
	2006/7	0	27	0	0	1	28

		Bed & Breakfast	Hostel	LA/HA stock	Private sector leased	Other	Total
	2007/8	1	22	0	0	0	23
	2008/9	0	17	0	0	0	17
Fenland	2002/3	5	10	86	0	0	101
	2003/4	3	9	136	4	0	152
	2004/5	2	8	89	0	0	99
	2005/6	8	11	74	0	0	93
	2006/7	1	15	34	0	0	50
	2007/8	4	10	9	0	0	23
	2008/9	4	11	4	0	0	19
Huntingdonshire	2002/3	23	21	17	0	0	61
	2003/4	10	22	31	0	0	63
	2004/5	16	38	37	19	0	110
	2005/6	12	21	38	25	0	96
	2006/7	10	26	31	26	0	93
	2007/8	18	18	31	21	0	88
	2008/9	8	18	18	17	0	61
South Cambridgeshire	2002/3	6	27	15	82	2	132
	2003/4	0	26	27	85	5	143
	2004/5	3	27	26	86	11	153
	2005/6	0	24	39	71	3	137
	2006/7	0	23	39	47	3	112
	2007/8	0	20	16	21	0	57
	2008/9	0	18	18	9	0	45
Forest Heath	2002/3	0	15	1	0	0	16
	2003/4	1	18	0	0	0	19
	2004/5	1	13	11	0	0	25
	2005/6	2	10	7	0	0	19
	2006/7	0	8	9	0	0	17
	2007/8	0	8	8	0	0	16
	2008/9	0	10	1	0	0	11
St Edmundsbury	2002/3	0	0	15	1	0	16
	2003/4	3	0	0	0	33	36
	2004/5	5	0	0	0	0	5
	2005/6	4	0	0	0	0	4
	2006/7	2	0	8	0	0	10
	2007/8	8	2	8	0	0	18
	2008/9	0	0	4	1	0	5
Sub-Region	2002/3	54	121	164	131	4	474
	2003/4	26	121	237	142	43	569
	2004/5	37	141	210	153	18	559
	2005/6	37	117	211	130	9	504
	2006/7	26	115	172	97	9	419
	2007/8	44	94	130	60	5	333
	2008/9	18	93	91	45	0	247

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.