**Sub Regional Homelessness Group – 25th October 2023**

**Housing Board – 3rd November 2023**

**2022-23: Overview of Homelessness Across** **Peterborough, Cambridgeshire & West Suffolk**

2022-23 largely saw a homelessness levels increasing across the sub region over the previous year with a total of 5332 households owed either a prevention or relief duty at the point of approaching, compared to 4996 the previous year (a 7% increase)

Breaking this down further, overall across the local authorities within the sub region:

1. 2,864 households were threatened with homelessness and owed a prevention duty in 2022-23 (a 15% increase over the previous year). The figure for England as a whole only saw a 5% increase.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Households owed prevention duty in  2022-23 | % change against 2021-22 | National position -  % change against 2021-22 |
| 2,864 | 15% increase | 5%  increase |

1. The number of relief duties accepted by local authorities has steadily decreased over the last couple of years, with 2,468 households owed a relief duty in 2022-23, a decrease of 2% on the previous year. The national figure actually saw a 9% increase over the same period.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Households owed relief duty in 2022-23 | % change against 2021-22 | National position  % change against 2021-22 |
| 2,468 | 2% decrease | 9% increase |

As shown in Figure 1, from Q2 in 2021-22 there has been an upward trend in the number of households being assisted by councils at the Prevention duty stage, and at the same time a slight reduction in the numbers assisted at the Relief duty stage. Given that the priority is on earlier intervention to stop a homelessness crisis developing in the first stage, this is the preferred position to best achieve this outcome.

The number of households owed the ‘main’ housing duty (after all prevention and relief options have been exhausted) has decreased slightly in the second half of 2022-23, compared to the first. However, there were a total of 1,105 households being owed the main housing duty which is an 8% increase on the previous year.

The reasons for homelessness are explored in more detail later in this paper.

Households owed the **main housing duty** (after prevention & relief has been exhausted) 2022-23

Peterborough, Cambridgeshire & West SuffolkCouncils:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Households owed the main housing duty in 2022-23 | % change against 2021-22 | National position  % change against 2021-22 |
| 1,105 | 8%  increase | 3%  increase |

**Causes of Homelessness.**

The reason for loss of last settled home is a good indication of the cause of homelessness for households assessed as being owed a duty.

**At Prevention Duty stage:**

Fig 2:

As in 2021/22, the two single largest causes of homelessness at the prevention duty stage were family or friends no longer being able to accommodate and End of a private rented tenancy.

In summary:

* Family or friends no longer willing to accommodate – 823 households which was 29% of all cases at this stage. This was a 29% increase on the previous year.
* End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy in the private rented sector – 961 households which was 34% of all cases. This was a 40% increase on the previous year.
* Non-violent relationship breakdown – 150 households which was an 18% reduction on the previous year.
* Domestic abuse – 188 households – 7% of all cases and a 3% reduction on last year.

**At Relief Duty stage:**

Fig 3:

A relief duty is triggered where the household approaches the local authority at the point of actual homelessness. The most common reason for homelessness at this stage was due to family or friends being no longer willing to accommodate. This was the situation with 730 households or 30% of all households that were owed a relief duty. This is a 5% increase from the previous year.

Domestic abuse was the second largest cause of homelessness, (439 households) accounting for 18% of all homelessness at the relief duty stage. This is a 5% reduction on the previous year.

Other notable trends include an increase in instances of homelessness as a result of evictions from social rented tenancies (107 households which is a 55% increase on the previous year).

Whereas in 2021/22 local authorities were accepting more instances of homelessness at the relief duty stage, in 2022/23 we this has shifted so that homelessness assistance and duties are being triggered at the prevention stage. This is as we would hope to see and is in line with the intention of the homelessness legislation, where earlier intervention should take place at the prevention stage as opposed to dealing with a crisis situation when homelessness occurs.

**Outcomes at the Prevention Duty Stage**

The homelessness legislation requires local authorities to take reasonable steps to try to prevent or relieve a household’s homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation for at least 6 months. These duties usually last 56 days each. The reasons for duties ending indicate the likely outcomes for these applicants.

The number of prevention duties that ended increased by 17% on the previous year. The single biggest cause of the prevention duty ending was as a result of a successful prevention with accommodation being secured for 6 months or more (50% of cases had this successful outcome, compared to 53% achieving this outcome nationally).

Of all households where a prevention duty ended, 25% became homeless, and were therefore owed a relief duty. This figure was 24% nationally.

**Outcomes at the Relief Duty Stage**

When the relief duty was brought to an end in 2022-23, in 30% of cases this was due to a successful outcome where accommodation had been secured for 6 months or more (compared to 36% nationally and 34% in the previous year). In 55% of cases homelessness had not been resolved and at this point the local authority would move on to assess whether the main housing duty was owed to the household.

**Decisions at the Main Housing Duty Stage.**

Across all the local authorities in 20221-23, there were a total of 1,619 cases where homelessness was not resolved at the relief duty stage and a decision was made whether the councils owed the main housing duty. Of this number, 1,105 (or 68%) were subsequently assessed as being owed the main housing duty, with a commitment to help secure longer-term housing. This compared to 69% of cases in the previous year.

**Household Types Owed Prevention & Relief Duties.**

Figures 7 & 8 below show the make up of households where a prevention or relief duty was accepted in 2022-23 (also shown broken down by local authority area).

At the prevention duty stage we can see that the two largest household types are single men (29% of cases, compared to 31% last year) and single parents with a dependant child (28% of cases compared to 26% last year).

At the relief duty stage single men are largest household type approaching for housing assistance, this being 48% of all cases (47% last year). This is more than double the next largest household types - single female and single parent households (both 21% which is similar to the previous year).

**Households in Temporary Accommodation.**

The number of households accommodated by LAs under a homelessness duty saw reductions in Q2 & Q3 but returned back to the same number (796 households) at the end of Q4 as at the beginning of the year. This is a 17% rise over the 689 households that were accommodated at the beginning of 21-22.

The number of households being placed in temporary accommodation is affected by several factors. These include what proportion of those owed a relief duty are also owed a duty to provide emergency accommodation and how many households are subsequently owed the main housing duty. As the graph below shows, although Q3 & Q4 saw a slight decrease in the number of households owed the main housing duty compared to Q1 & Q2, each quarter shows a higher number than all quarters over the last three years, bar Q3 & Q4 of 21-22.

Of all forms of temporary accommodation, the most unsatisfactory is bed & breakfast style accommodation. A worrying trend is the use of this type of accommodation both locally and nationally. The chart below shows how the use of B&B has increased from 56 households at the end of 21-22 to 172 at the end of 22-23.

An important factor with councils attempting to reduce the use of temporary accommodation, and B&B in particular, is the ability to make an offer of settled housing so that lengths of stay in temporary accommodation are kept to a minimum. Where this is not possible then ‘blockages’ in temporary accommodation may occur with households stays increasing and the total number growing. The movement of households through temporary accommodation is therefore vital and is impacted by the areas of lettings into the social rented sector as well as the availability of the private rented sector. It’s for these reasons that