



# **Draft Homelessness Strategy**

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham  
2016-2021

**One Borough, One community:  
tackling homelessness**

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# 1.Introduction

The borough recognises the importance of having a robust homelessness strategy in place which sets out the Council's services, resources, pathways and interventions in preventing and alleviating the experience of homelessness.

In preventing homelessness and attending to crisis presentations when they occur, the borough has to ensure there is comprehensive, universal assistance and advice to support people in making informed decisions about the options available to them.

In a number of circumstances the services which the Council and its partners provide are critical because all too often individuals affected by the loss of accommodation become and stay homeless through a complex combination of reasons. These range from domestic violence, addiction, debt, worklessness, poor health and wellbeing and sometimes through no fault of their own. This leads to isolation and a disconnection from pathways to essential support which help identify and break that downward cycle.

However, fundamental to our approach is the view that homeless people should be able to pursue options which allow them to resolve their own homelessness. Following in the Council's civic objective of a creating a socially responsible community, residents are encouraged to take responsibility and to become more resilient at a time of pressured and finite availability of accommodation.

As a result of the Homelessness Act 2002 every local authority is under a statutory duty to review their homelessness services every five years, setting out a comprehensive assessment of trends in homelessness. Subsequently the borough is expected to prepare a prevention strategy charting activities to tackle and mitigate against homelessness over the next five year period.

There has been significant change since the publication of Barking and Dagenham's previous homelessness strategy in 2008 and the Council has taken stock of the changing policy context of homelessness when providing services to tackle it. The introduction of the Localism Act 2011 and the on-going reforms to welfare have been major influences in how local authorities approach housing need, homelessness, benefit entitlement and the delivery of affordable housing. Fiscal consolidation at a national level has led to reduced funding, requiring the Council to target its prevention strategy around carefully managed and finite resources.

Against that challenging context, Barking and Dagenham remains committed to working with partner agencies and the voluntary sector in strengthening its housing

advice services and preventing homelessness in the first instance. Based on the evidence of its review, the borough has set itself the following objectives:

- To reduce demand through prevention (prevention)
- Enabling pathways away from homelessness (prevention)
- Create integrated services at first contact (presentation)
- Provide appropriate accommodation options (provision)

These objectives underlie the principles of the Council's ambition which aims to reduce demand, encourage responsible choices and behaviour change, manage expectations and tackle root problems by integrating service delivery and developing partnerships more effectively.

## **2. Policy Context**

### **2.1 National Policy Context**

The introduction of the Localism Act 2011 and on-going welfare reform has challenged the approach of how local authorities assess and meet housing need, prevent homelessness and manage resources to deliver affordable housing and advice services.

Developing and embedding an efficient seamless, multi-agency approach has been the driver of national and regional policy announcements with local authorities increasingly expected to be more innovative in preventing homelessness in the first instance, reducing demand and cope with crisis presentations with more efficient use of resources.

#### **2.1.1 Cost of Homelessness and Making Every Contact Count**

In 2012, the Government published the Making Every Contact Count report, drawing on the need for effective joint working to prevent homelessness. Based on the findings of the No Second Night Out strategy on rough sleeping in 2011 and the Cost of Homelessness review, it encouraged the design of locally integrated services which tackled the roots of homelessness, such as troubled family upbringings, health inequalities and addiction, involvement in crime and improving access to work and training opportunities, as well as creating financial resilience.

The National Practitioner Support Service has been developed to support local authorities seeking to lead in the continuous improvement of homeless advice and prevention services. Where the authority meets the ten corporate local challenge objectives it can apply for a Gold Standard as a measure of high quality standards.

#### **2.1.2 Reform of the Welfare System**

The Government's first tranche of welfare reform between 2012/15 had significant impact for housing services and homeless prevention in Barking and Dagenham, precipitating a surge in housing advice and a significant rise in homeless presentations based on familial ejection and loss of rented tenancies.

1,600 council tenants were affected by the reduction in Spare Room Subsidy for under-occupancy and 537 were subject to the £500 a week Total Benefit Cap with a

resulting inability to afford rent payments. The reduction averaged between £35 and £323 per week<sup>1</sup>

Reforms to the eligibility for the Single Accommodation Rate, changes to disability benefit, the devolution of local Council Tax Support and reductions in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels have aggravated tenancy sustainment as well as diminishing the supply of available lets for social placements in the private rental market.

The second phase of welfare reform unveiled in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015 is expected to exacerbate existing problems. Proposals to remove automatic housing support to 18-21 year olds, the four year freeze in main rates of working age benefits and tax credits coupled with a further reduction in the Total Benefit Cap of a non-working family to £23,000 are likely to escalate the pressures upon the housing advice service. Projections for the numbers affected are still being collated by Revenues and Benefits in conjunction with the Department for Work and Pensions.

### **2.1.3 Localism Act 2011**

In the Localism Act 2011, the Government devolved powers to encourage local authorities to tailor local policies and housing demand to local circumstances. The agenda allowed councils:

- to revise access to social housing supply with reforms to allocation policies;
- to offer different types of tenure
- to end their homelessness duty with direct offers of accommodation in the private rented sector.

In response Barking and Dagenham adopted a new Housing Allocation Scheme<sup>2</sup> in 2014 which introduced:

- residential qualifications
- reformed local preferences
- reserved the right to create flexible tenancies for specific circumstances
- affordable housing options for working families
- the discharge of its homelessness obligation into the private rented sector.

### **2.1.4 Housing and Planning Bill 2015**

The Housing and Planning Bill is currently passing through its committee stage in Parliament and could have implications for housing supply in Barking and Dagenham. The introduction of Starter Homes as an affordable housing product

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<sup>1</sup> Internal records 2013/14, Elevate

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Choice-Homes-Allocation-Policy2.pdf>

could reduce the number of generally affordable social housing tenures provided in the borough and the impact of forthcoming regulations on housing association Voluntary Right to Buy will be monitored carefully.

## **2.2 Local Policy Context**

Notwithstanding the response to recent Government reforms, the Council has continued to rationalise resources and cement multi-agency working through its corporate strategies to prevent homelessness:

### **2.2.1 Corporate Strategies**

#### *One Borough, One Community; London's Growth Opportunity*

In 2014 the Council unveiled its corporate vision of encouraging civic pride, enabling social responsibility and growing the borough's sense of opportunity. This included commitments to help residents shape their own quality of life, take responsibility for themselves, homes and communities as well as integrating services for the vulnerable, building high quality homes and supporting investment in housing.

#### *Housing Strategy 2012/17*

The borough's overarching housing strategy resolves to improve the quality of life of all residents through thriving sustainable communities and by addressing the needs of residents living in different types of tenure. It prioritises tackling homelessness through prevention activities and providing suitable housing options where crisis presentations require the Council to act<sup>3</sup>.

#### *Tenancy Strategy Statement 2012*

Working in partnership with housing associations to deliver homes which address local need, the Council recognised the importance of allowing providers a flexibility of housing tenure. The borough's tenancy statement emphasises a desire for registered providers to give due regard to the Council's view on rent levels and accommodation for working families.

#### *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2015*

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is the annual assessment of current and future health and social care needs of a population. It provides a holistic outlook of the socio-economic issues facing the borough, including recommendations for public policy commissioners on strategic outcomes in reducing homelessness.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Barking-and-Dagenham-Housing-Strategy-2012-17.pdf>

### *Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015/19*

Housing, homelessness and fuel poverty are recognised as determinants of public health and critical to increasing the life expectancy of people living in Barking and Dagenham. The strategy pledges to close the gap in life expectancy and to improve health and social care outcomes through integrated services.

### *Growth Strategy 2013/23*

Aspirations for growth are entrenched in the 20-year plan which establishes the priorities of attracting investment, creating a higher skilled workforce, building businesses and widening housing choice<sup>4</sup>.

## **2.2.2 Corporate Programmes**

The reduction in resources has meant that the Council is addressing the provision of services creatively. To reduce demand the Council is focussing on more effective early interventions, nudging behaviour change and encouraging self-reliance while developing seamless integrated responses when demand is presented in the most acute of circumstances.

This overarching approach is captured in the Council's evolving corporate Ambition 2020 project coupled with the Housing Transformation Programme's development of Housing+ as a multi-disciplinary model of housing service delivery.

## **2.2.3 Demography and housing supply issues**

Continuing change to the demographic and the socio-economic profile of the borough coupled with rising demands for a mixed supply of housing has intensified the need to have responsive services which can prevent homelessness in the first instance and provide adequate accommodation in the worst case scenario.

### *Deprivation*

Barking and Dagenham has areas of high deprivation and is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> of 352 local authorities in the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation<sup>5</sup>. It also has the lowest household incomes in the capital, with almost 25% of those in work on the minimum wage; 10.4% of its population is unemployed and 60% in receipt of some kind of welfare entitlement. While there have been improvements in educational attainment and regeneration projects continue to attract new investment and employment

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Growth-Strategy-2013-2023.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>



opportunities, housing affordability remains a barrier for many in accessing accommodation.

### *Population*

Barking and Dagenham's population has seen unprecedented change in recent years. The 2011 Census recorded a significant overall population increase of 13.4% to 185,911. Barking and Dagenham has the highest population percentage of 0-19 year olds in the country including a 50% increase in 0-4 year olds, placing a huge pressure on school places. In addition there has been the largest decrease in the 65+ age group in London<sup>6</sup>.

### *Household size*

Trends identified in the borough's Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Housing Needs Survey 2011 saw the number and size of households increasing giving Barking and Dagenham the highest occupancy rate in the capital. Conversely, cultural shift towards smaller families, trends towards divorce and familial breakdown has led to the borough having the highest percentage of lone parent households in all of England and Wales.

In terms of homelessness the shift to smaller households manifested itself between 2012 and 2015 with an increased number of homeless presentations based on persons not being able to live with parents or in the familial home and therefore pressurising demand for one-bed, two-bed or shared accommodation.

### *Diversity*

The ethnic diversity of Barking and Dagenham underwent significant change between 2001 and 2011 with the number of foreign-born nationals residing in the borough increasing by 205%. Since 2001, there has been a 30% decrease in the borough's White British population and the Black African population has grown by over 20,000, which is the largest increase of the Black African population in London. The White Other population has also continued to grow from 4,348 in 2001 to 14,525 in 2011<sup>7</sup>. Like much of east London, the enlargement of the European Union since 2004 has seen the borough become a destination for migrants from eastern Europe and the former accession countries.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2011-Census-Borough-Analysis.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2011-Census-Borough-Analysis.pdf>

## *Housing Affordability*

The cost of buying a home in Barking and Dagenham is still 12 times more than the total median annual household income of the borough (£25,499)<sup>8</sup> and affordability continues to hamper the ability of residents to access home ownership. Average house values were recorded at £302,625 in November 2015<sup>9</sup> but despite Barking and Dagenham remaining one of the most affordable places in London to purchase a home, property prices continue on an upward trajectory.

It is conservatively estimated that between 12,000 and 14,000 homes supply the private rented market (PRS) in the borough representing 17% of all stock and continuing to grow. The PRS has quadrupled in a decade but demand is once again outstripping supply. Analysis of quarterly returns from local letting agent surveys recorded an average rent level of £1,231 per month in September 2015 with 62% of respondents expecting further rent increases placing pressure on the budgets of vulnerable households. The anecdotal survey suggested that three quarters of landlords were pitching their lets to in-work tenants in recognition of the borough being an attractive low-rent hub for professionals<sup>10</sup>.

Importantly, figures from the Ministry of Justice in July 2015<sup>11</sup> illustrated that sustainment of home ownership and private tenancies were under strain with 1 in every 45 homes subject to a possession claim. With wages only just beginning to return to pre-Recession levels and falling levels of housing welfare, there has been a significant three year spike in homeless applications based on repossession of the home and lets due to mortgage and rent arrears.

The supply of affordable homes was identified as a decisive issue in the 2011 Housing Needs Survey which recommended an additional 1,333 new affordable homes a year, particularly around family-sized accommodation and drawing on concerns of overcrowding and high levels of occupancy. 1,973 new affordable<sup>12</sup>, intermediate and social homes have been delivered in Barking and Dagenham in the last five years however the recession, reductions in development grant and rationalisation among registered providers has led to only a trickle of new supply.

### **2.3 Regional Context and the East London Housing Partnership (ELHP)**

The issue of homelessness also cuts across boundaries and Barking and Dagenham works to the strategic objectives set out in the Mayor of London's Housing Strategy.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.caci.co.uk/>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/488368/November\\_2015\\_HPI.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/488368/November_2015_HPI.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Barking and Dagenham Quarterly Letting Agents Forum – September 2015

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mortgage-and-landlord-possession-statistics>

<sup>12</sup> <http://data.london.gov.uk/gla-affordable-housing-statistics/>

The borough also works with the Greater London Authority and sub-regional partners to share information, best practice and harness resources around joint projects. In particular we co-operate with the East London Housing Partnership which is based in the offices of Barking and Dagenham.

The ELHP comprises the seven east London boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Tower Hamlets, Newham, Havering, Hackney, Waltham Forest, Redbridge and the City of London Corporation. The partnership collaborates on addressing the sub-region's strategic housing needs and pressures. One of its core priorities is to contribute to minimising and preventing homelessness.

ELHP created a homelessness and lettings group in response to having the highest housing need in the capital which was evidenced by increasing numbers of rough sleepers, significant levels of domestic violence, high volumes of placements from other sub-regions and greater loss of private rented tenancies.

The ELHP has been particularly successful in recent years in helping tackle homelessness for households who are not necessarily owed a duty by the local authority. Projects like the East London Single Homelessness Project and the East London Women's Project all provided housing solutions for single non-priority victims of sexual abuse, domestic violence, discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and multiple needs clients who were either homeless or at risk of homelessness. The East London Women's Project has to date assisted 27 women with multiple and complex needs and the Single Homelessness Project supported 337 people with rent deposits and support to sustain a tenancy<sup>13</sup>.

ELHP has also worked with other London sub-regions to help achieve cost reductions on temporary accommodation through the Inter-Borough Accommodation Agreements (IBAA).

This year the ELHP approved its Homelessness and Lettings Strategy 2015/20, binding sub-regional partners to the following clear commitments:

- Preventing homelessness before people reach the streets
- Greater collaboration with regard to the impacts of welfare reform and Universal Credit
- Improve services offered to single homeless people deemed not in priority need
- Reduce and prevent homelessness caused by domestic violence, particularly against women
- Adopt a No Second Night Out approach to rough sleeping

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.elhp.org.uk/single-homelessness.html>

## 3. Homeless Review

### 3.1.1 Homelessness Strategy 2008/13

The 2008/13 strategy outlined a number of key performance details at a time when resources were significantly greater and the emphasis was on initiating fresh prevention activities. As the policy context has significantly changed since 2008 this review only summarises some of the key results pertaining from the following objectives:

#### *Early intervention*

- Developed joint assessments and protocols in relation to safeguarding children
- Achieved the national target to end use of B&B accommodation for 16-17 year olds by 2010
- Developed the East Street housing advice and The Foyer projects
- Increased take up the Sanctuary scheme
- All housing advice staff trained in substance misuse and domestic violence

#### *Increased choice and promoting independence*

- Delivered 758 rent deposit tenancies by 2013
- Increased the number of accredited landlords offering quality homes to 450
- Returned 531 long-term empty private dwellings back to use by 2013

#### *Partnership working*

- Worked with the East London Housing Partnership to deliver sub-regional approaches to single persons homelessness and collaborated with the ELHP Reciprocal Agreement, a partnership of eight local authorities and twenty registered providers to reduce and prevent homelessness

### 3.1.2 Responding to homelessness

The Homelessness Act 2002 mandates the local authority to conduct a five-yearly review of current levels of homelessness, observe trends and analysis, illustrate prevention activity and interventions and examine the offer of advice, services and resources.

The impact of welfare reform, public funding reductions and a challenging housing market have heightened the demand for housing advice services and lead to the subsequent rise in housing applications over the last three years. Footfall and calls to the housing options team doubled to 2,449 by 2015; the total number of homeless decisions in 2014/15 stood at 1,900 and dwarfed the 408 recorded in 2011/12 while

the number of preventative interventions against homelessness accounted for almost 2,000 cases.

Barking and Dagenham has responded to the increased volume of need by continuing to build on existing partnership arrangements, training staff and tenants alike on the impact of welfare changes and sustaining tenancies, reshaping its allocations policy and planning for new models of housing provision in response to reduced resources.

Through various data sets the following statistical review examines the current climate around crisis presentations and homeless preventions to provide an analysis of the pressure points in homeless policy and create the subtext for the prevention objectives of the strategy. The review examines:

- The Council's duties and the main causes of statutory homelessness;
- Interventions and resources to prevent homelessness
- non-priority homelessness and support for vulnerable households
- temporary accommodation
- housing supply issues

## 3.2 The Duty and Main Causes of Homelessness

### 3.2.1 The Council's Duties on Homelessness

In reviewing the local authority's obligations under housing legislation, essential distinctions between various scenarios of housing need and where the duty applies needs to be made.

**Priority homelessness** – individuals who have been accepted by the Council as eligible for assistance, are homeless and in priority need, have met the legislative criteria and have made a homeless application:

- Council has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation
- normally households who are going to be evicted or living in accommodation which is unreasonable for them to remain in
- includes families, pregnant women and single vulnerable people

**Non-Priority homelessness** - applicants who are not assessed as in priority need but entitled to advice and assistance such as available options in the private rental market or support agencies

- normally single homeless people and childless couples
- includes rough sleepers

### 3.2.2 Statutory homelessness in Barking and Dagenham

#### **Overview**

Residents seeking homelessness advice continues to rise. By November 2015, almost 3,000 people had contacted John Smith House for support. The number of applications accepted as eligible, unintentionally homeless, in priority need and therefore owed a duty also fell from 853 in 2013/14 to 764 in 2014/15<sup>14</sup>.

The slight decline in acceptances is a reflection of some of the prevention activities employed when residents make their initial approach.

#### **Statistical analysis**

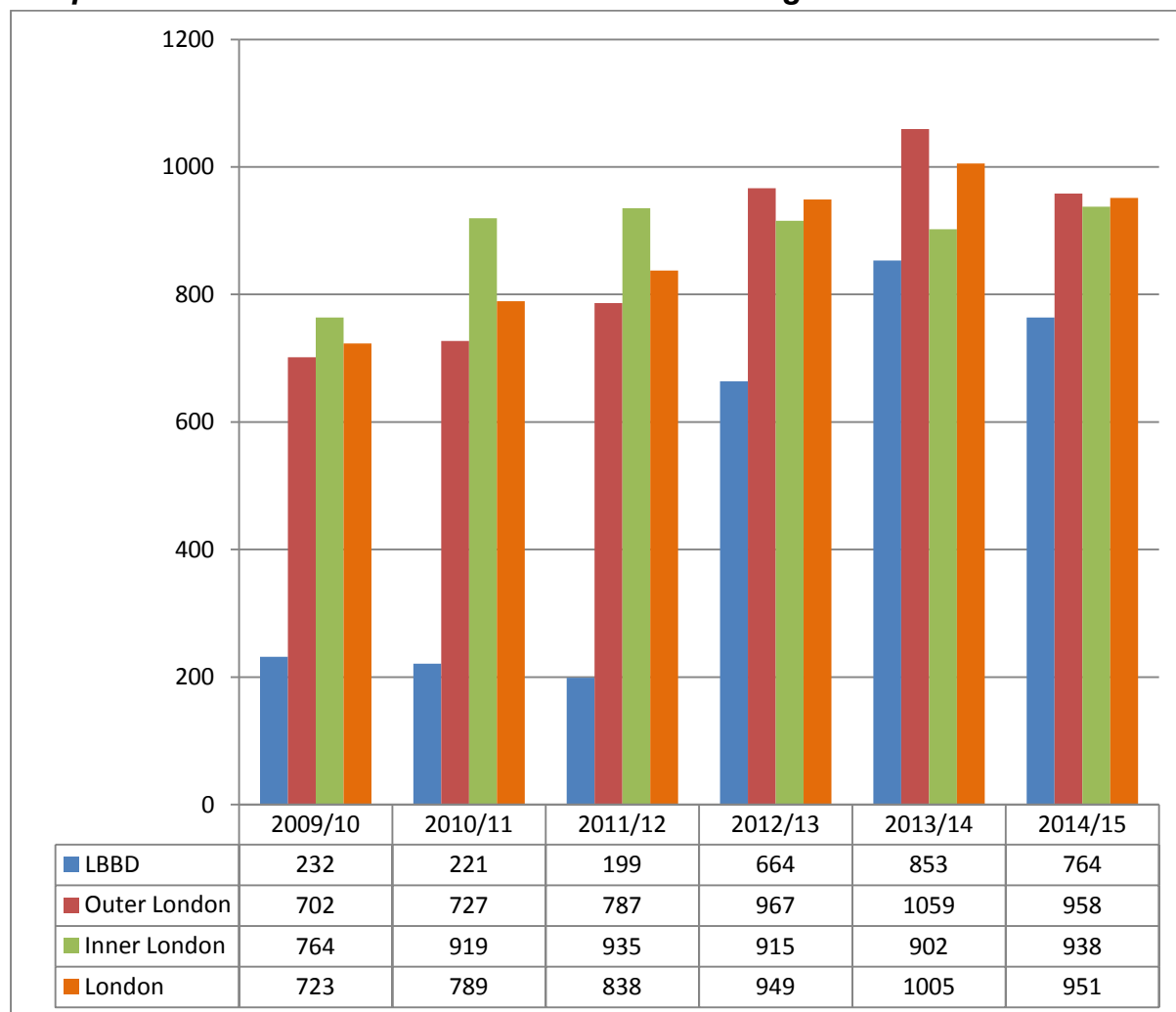
The statistical analysis below highlights the number of annual applications made in Barking and Dagenham over the last five years and compares with the average number of applications made across the capital and the east London sub-region. It

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<sup>14</sup> National P1E homelessness returns and internal records, Housing Options Team

suggests that demand has slightly dipped through effective pre-intervention activities and is still lower than sub-regional and London average:

**Fig.1: Number of homelessness applications made in Barking and Dagenham compared to London and inner/outer London sub-regions**



Source: DCLG Live Tables

The proportion of all homeless decisions which go on to be accepted by a local authority as statutorily homeless and eligible for support represents the homeless acceptance rate. In 2014/15, Barking and Dagenham had the 12th highest acceptance rate nationally and 9th highest in London<sup>15</sup>.

Decisions on homelessness fell from over 700 to just over 400 in 2011/12 just before the impact of welfare and housing reforms started to bite. The succeeding year saw that figure almost treble to 1,186 decisions and rise to 1,900 by 2014/15. The eligibility of those approaches is captured below and shows a rise in households which are eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need but records a more dramatic spike in those deemed to be eligible but not in priority need:

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

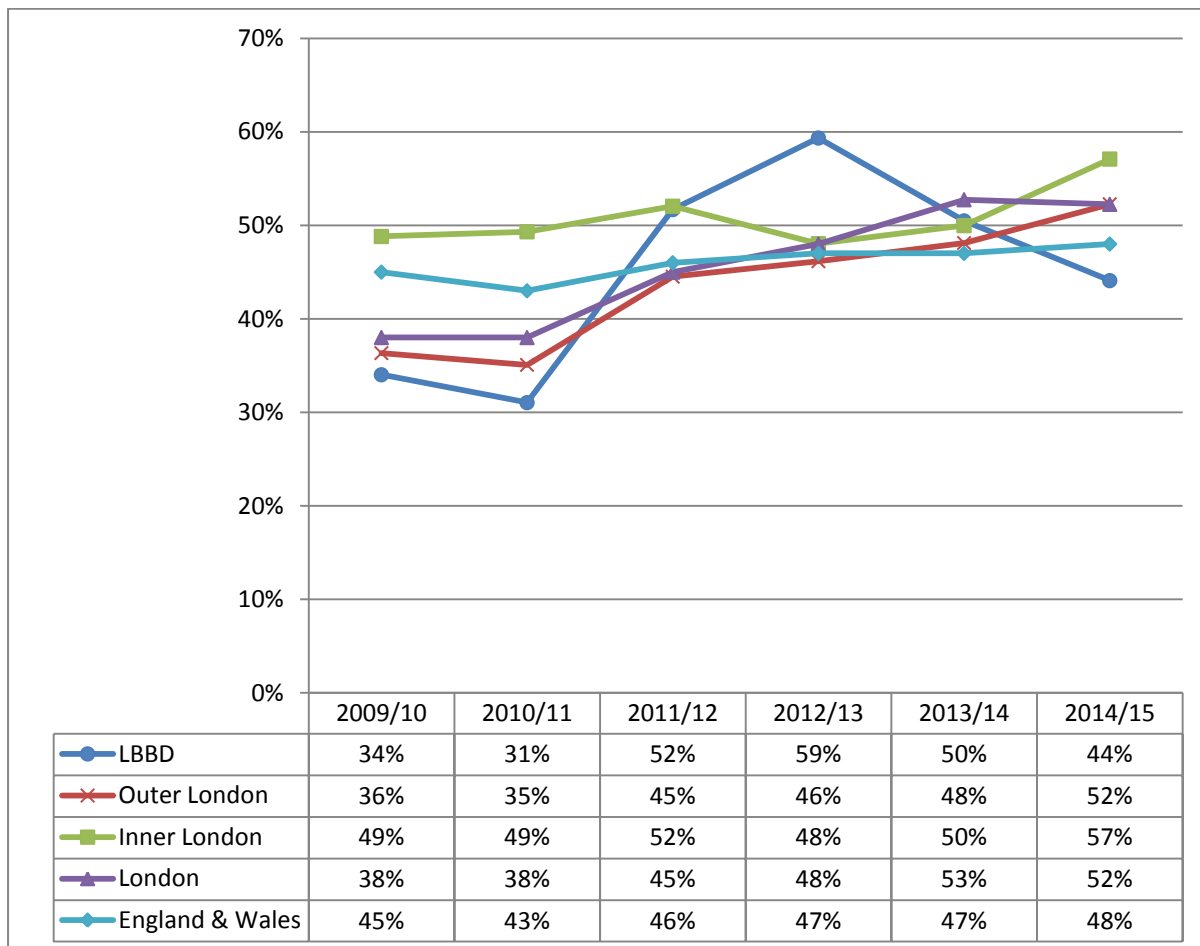
**Fig.2: Number of homeless decisions**

<b>Homeless decisions</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Eligibility, unintentionally homeless and in priority need	221	199	664	853	764
Eligible, homeless and in priority need but intentionally so	25	12	49	76	137
Eligible, homeless but not in priority need	197	46	82	425	557
Eligible but not homeless	269	128	324	336	275
Ineligible	27	23	67	100	167
<b>Total decisions</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>1186</b>	<b>1790</b>	<b>1900</b>

Source: P1E form on homelessness



**Fig. 3: Number of statutory homeless acceptances made in Barking and Dagenham compared to London, sub-regions and England 2009/15**



Source: DCLG Live Tables

### 3.2.3 Main causes of homelessness

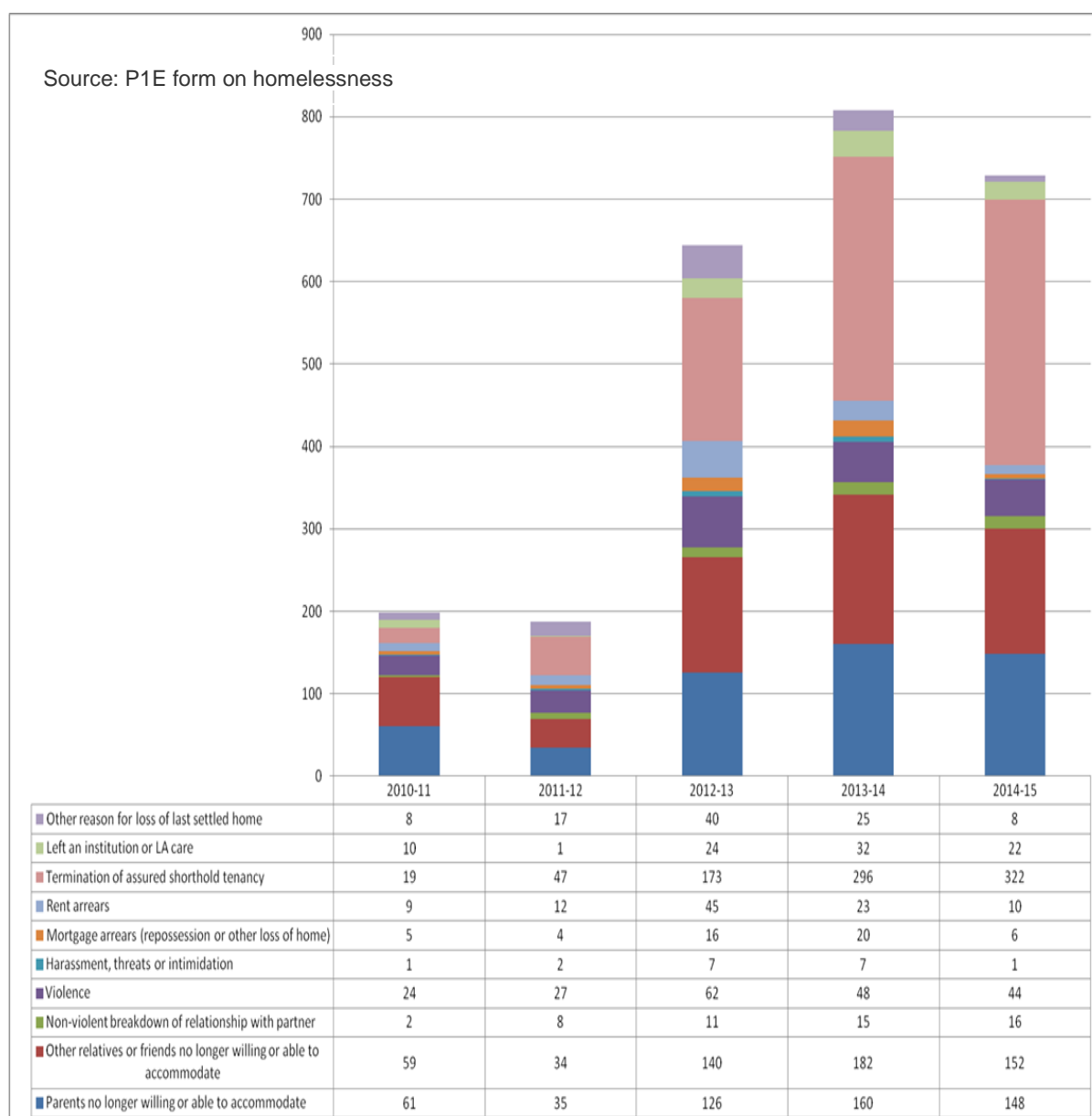
The main reasons for homelessness are documented below illustrating an upward trajectory in the termination of assured short hold tenancies (ASTs). The breakdown of parental and familial relationships also accounts for a sizeable portion. The growth in terminated ASTs appears to be a reflection of capped local housing allowance and the impact of welfare reductions forcing private landlords to pitch their market to in-work tenants.

**Fig.4: Main causes of statutory homelessness 2010/15**

<b>Main causes of homelessness</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Parental ejection or other household ejection	120	69	340	342	300
Relationship breakdown	22	28	81	55	53
Violent relationship breakdown with partner/associated other	23	25	55	40	37
Loss of assured shorthold tenancy in PRS	47	64	333	339	341
Mortgage arrears	5	4	20	20	6

Source: P1E form on homelessness

**Fig.5: Reasons for statutory homelessness 2010/15**



### 3.2.2 Priority need categories of statutory homelessness

To be accepted as statutorily homeless and receive assistance from the local authority, the applicant must have an established priority need defined under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 and subsequently amended by the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002.

The following table depicts the different categories of those accepted of which being a household including dependent children is the most consistent factor.

**Fig.6: Statutory homelessness by priority need 2008-**

Main priority need group	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Household with children/pregnancy	156	150	501	628	602
Single people 16/17-18/20 years	9	8	10	9	4
Physical disability	18	9	39	52	46
Mental illness	25	21	69	102	66

Source: P1E form on homelessness

### 3.2.3 Age profile of statutory homeless households

The most significant age profile of those accepted as statutorily homeless is 25-44 years of age.

**Fig.7: Statutory homelessness by age profile 2008-**

Age	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
16-24	79	54	171	209	163
25-44	115	125	401	501	469
45-59	21	15	81	116	107
60-64	1	4	6	16	12
65-74	4	1	3	8	12
75+	1	0	2	3	1

Source: P1E form on homelessness

### 3.2.4 Family/household type of statutory homeless

The following graph represents the types of household which have been granted statutory homelessness acceptances. Lone parent households headed by a female translated into the largest cohort.

**Fig.8: Statutory homelessness by household type**

2014-15	Couple with Dependent Children	Lone Parent Household with Dependent Children		One Person Household		All Other Household Groups	Total
		Male Applicant	Female Applicant	Male Applicant	Female Applicant		
Apr – Jun	44	6	92	21	27	4	194
Jul - Sept	43	6	100	22	16	4	191
Oct - Dec	59	6	103	18	19	3	208
Jan - Mar	36	9	98	19	2	7	171
<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>764</b>

Source: P1E form on homelessness

### 3.2.5 Ethnic origin of priority homeless households

The following charts provide insight into the ethnic origin of accepted homelessness cases.

**Fig.9: Statutory homelessness by ethnicity**

Statutory Homeless	White	Black	Asian	Mixed	Other	Ethnicity Not Stated	Total
2010-11	133	59	19	2	5	3	221
2011-12	88	86	15	3	3	4	199
2012-13	340	206	38	61	2	17	664
2013-14	402	295	63	78	12	3	853
2014-15	327	276	71	74	12	4	764

Source: P1E form on homelessness

### 3.2.6 Non-priority homelessness

An applicant is owed a non-statutory duty if found to be homeless but is either intentionally so or not in priority need. There is only a duty to provide advice and assistance and not the same duty to procure permanent housing. Notwithstanding the lesser duty, local authorities are increasingly encouraged to work with partner organisations towards finding solutions for this wide-ranging group to prevent and relieve periods of homelessness.

**Fig 10: Non-priority homeless cases in Barking and Dagenham 2010/15**

Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Non-priority homeless	491	186	455	837	969

Source: P1E form on homelessness

In circumstances where the main homeless duty is not owed, the Council still works to prevent the risk of homelessness among vulnerable people through integrated services and supported housing options. Supported housing schemes encourage independent living and are tailored to the particular needs of the client group.

### **3.2.7 Single homelessness**

Local authorities are under no duty to provide temporary accommodation to single homelessness persons who are not in priority need but do have the discretion should they chose to do so in order to avoid homelessness. These are largely represented by single people and childless couples, particularly in the under-35s age group.

Barking and Dagenham are only obliged to provide advice and assistance in accessing alternative accommodation despite the biggest rise in approaches to the Council coming from those deemed homeless but not in priority need<sup>16</sup>. This is a group where prioritisation and funding for homelessness services is dwindling across the capital.

Working with the ELHP through funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government, Barking and Dagenham engaged in the East London Single Homelessness Project providing a rent deposit and tenancy sustainment with 337 single homeless persons who had a connection to the East London sub region area. Established in 2011 it helped to provide access to 23 private sector tenancies for single homeless persons from Barking and Dagenham.

Following the closure of the project, the East London Housing Partnership is bidding for a £300,000 Big Lottery Funding grant to carry on its work for single homeless households to provide advice and tenancy support. It plans to work with the Credit Union which will provide rent deposits guaranteed by the ELHP.

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<sup>16</sup> National P1E statistical returns on homelessness

## 3.3 Resources and Preventing Homelessness

### 3.3.1 Overview

Barking and Dagenham has striven to support vulnerable residents in housing need and offer homelessness prevention assistance against a very challenging financial backdrop. The borough has increasingly funded invest to save initiatives, rationalised its housing procurement options and utilised external funding streams to reduce rising expenditure on temporary accommodation and ensure reliable advice services.

#### *Housing Choice and personal responsibility*

A fundamental first approach is the view that homeless people and those at risk of homelessness should be able to pursue options which allow them to resolve their housing problems. This thinking is captured in the Council's evolving Ambition 2020 programme.

Residents are encouraged to take personal responsibility and to become self-reliant so this strategy supports access to the right kind of information, advice and guidance on their options and the consequences of the choices they make. That includes training, employment, good tenancing skills and financial self-management to avoid homelessness and a review of all available housing choices and opportunities when crisis happens.

Faced with reduced government resources and the impending impact of the second phase of welfare reform, the Council has to target its prevention strategy around carefully managed and finite resources.

Barking and Dagenham remains committed to working with partner agencies and the voluntary sector in strengthening its approach to homelessness. However it will continue to seek to reduce demand on its services by:

- encouraging persons at risk to fully appraise all of their options
- intervening early to create pathways away from homelessness
- support independent living and self-reliance

Early intervention is a central feature of any prevention strategy and targeting our approaches at the primary reasons for accepted homelessness cases suggests there is a growing requirement for mediation, conflict resolution where appropriate, counselling services, income maximisation and debt reduction services and parenting initiatives

### 3.3.2 Resources

#### *Housing Options*

The Housing Options team play a crucial role in preventing homelessness through the provision of appropriate information and advice on available housing solutions, particularly encouraging self-resolution of peoples housing crises. Housing Options works closely with other housing advice teams including Choice Homes, accommodation services and the strategic delivery team.

**Fig.11: Housing Advice Services at John Smith House, Dagenham**



The need for housing advice services has also significantly increased over the same period with twenty three members of staff advising clients daily. The following table shows numbers visiting John Smith House seeking assistance:

**Fig.12: Footfall to John Smith House 2013/15:**

Que-matic reports – Footfall to Housing Advice Services	
Numbers for March 2013	1436
Numbers for March 2014	2269
Numbers for March 2015	2449

Source: Que-matic internal reports, Housing Options Service



### ***Homeless Prevention Grant (HPG)***

The Department of Communities and Local Government provides an annual non-ring fenced grant through the Council's baseline and revenue support grant to fund activities related to the prevention of homelessness in Barking and Dagenham.

However, the amount of HPG provided to Barking and Dagenham fell from £600,000 in 2011/12 to £416,280 in 2014/15, representing a 31% reduction in grant<sup>17</sup>.

### ***Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)***

The Department for Work and Pensions supplies an annual grant settlement to support housing benefit recipients whose entitlement does not cover the full costs of their rent. As a result of the recent welfare reform programme the distribution has been mainly targeted at mitigating its adverse impact upon tenants. DHP is now awarded in tranches and recipients are monitored case-by-case and awarded further payment on proof that they are proactively maintaining their rent and seeking training or employment.

Barking and Dagenham was awarded £1,176,392 in 2014/15 and payment has been used to counteract the risk of 1,393 cases of potential homelessness through rent arrears and to assist tenants subjected to income reductions through the Spare Room Subsidy. In 2013/14 the Council received £1,289,696 which assisted 1,369 households<sup>18</sup>.

### **3.3.3 Prevention Initiatives**

The introduction of the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 required local authorities to advise and assist people at immediate risk of becoming homeless by making reasonable interventions to prevent the loss of existing accommodation. The crux of the Homelessness Act 2002 was the review of prevention policy every five years and the resulting development of prevention-orientated strategies.

Barking and Dagenham has deployed a broad range of preventative interventions to alleviate the risk of homelessness through debt advice, assisting with rent deposits, resolving housing benefit problems, family mediation and preventing house repossessions. These interventions have helped to sustain tenancies and accommodation, minimising the number of households who would otherwise trigger an obligation to be housed under the statutory homelessness route.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/final-local-government-finance-settlement-england-2014-to-2015>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/final-local-government-finance-settlement-england-2014-to-2015>

**Fig.13: Cases prevented from become homeless 2010/15**

<b>Homeless prevention</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Total case prevented	516	724	1856	2181	1947

Source: Internal records, Housing Options service

### ***Preventing loss of assured shorthold accommodation***

The largest recent cause of homelessness has been the rise in private rented assured shorthold tenancies being terminated under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988. Although the reasons for this are difficult to measure, the Housing Options team currently work to prevent the loss of a tenancy under the following process:

- Check if the Section 21 notice to quit is valid
- Check if the property is licensed
- Explore if there are rent arrears
- Contact the landlord and attempt to negotiate incentives for a new tenancy
- Request a Call Credit 360 report
- If there are no rent arrears make a referral to B&D Lets for affordable housing if customer meets the income threshold
- Give customer a letter outlining their visit and actions taken

### ***Preventing parental/others ejection from accommodation***

Another recent major cause of homelessness has been the loss of accommodation due to parental ejection or where other parties are no longer in a position to accommodate the client. In such cases the Housing Options teams will adopt the following process:

- Contact the parent to confirm ejection/collect proof of abode for last six months
- Attempt mediation where appropriate
- Dispel myths regarding ease of access to social rented properties
- Brief Visiting Officer on situation and complete an Excluders Questionnaire

## **Rent Deposit Scheme (RDS)**

The RDS scheme allows for selected homeless households to sign up to a tenancy with a private landlord as a solution to their homelessness. The Council has assisted 903 households since 2008/09<sup>19</sup> by offering landlords four weeks rent as a deposit and an additional four weeks rent in advance in agreement for a 12 month tenancy and a guarantee that the tenant placed is given 'good tenancy' training.

**Fig.14: Number of tenancies created using Rent Deposit Scheme 2013/5**

Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Tenancies	152	107	38

Source: Internal records, Housing Options service

Barking and Dagenham's participation in the East London Single Homelessness Project also provided a rent deposit scheme for single homeless persons giving 23 individuals access to private sector tenancies between 2012/14.

## **Court Service Representation**

Barking and Dagenham previously funded the role of a court advocacy advisor who attended court to protect vulnerable homeowners subject to possession proceedings from eviction. It successfully prevented almost one hundred possession orders from being granted between 2008/12. The scheme is now administered by the Citizens Advice Bureau in conjunction with Edward Duthie solicitors.

## **Tenancy Sustainment Measures**

Sustaining tenancies is an effective way of preventing homelessness in the first instance and providing tenants with a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities is key. The Housing Options team helps in numerous ways by:

- providing 'good tenancy' training for clients with Rent Deposits
- using a Tenant Relations Officer working through the private sector housing team
- entering schools and explaining housing options in a creative way
- joining landlord services on the Rent Arrears Eviction Panel to work on prevention options

### **3.3.4 Housing Access and Referral Team (HART)**

The Housing Access and Referral Team has been an essential component in preventing homelessness and assisting independent living.

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<sup>19</sup> Internal records, Housing Options Team, 2008-2015

The team provides a gateway service offering advice and short-term support on matters including rent arrears, money management, benefit entitlement and securing suitable accommodation. To deliver this support HART works closely with other council teams and assists vulnerable persons with referral to appropriate agencies where additional support and independent living issues are evident. Where more intensive and longer-term support is required, HART refers the individual to East Living or the Independent Living Agency, the two external agencies contracted to provide housing-related floating support.

Referrals to the HART team are growing with 404 people assessed in 2012/13, 419 in 2013/14 and 454 in 2014/15<sup>20</sup>. The greatest demand continues to come from clients who have the primary vulnerabilities identified as mental health, living in temporary accommodation, physical disabilities or are teen parents. The greatest primary support need has been support because eviction is imminent, support connected with homelessness (meaning the person is in temporary accommodation and needs help to sustain it or is sofa surfing and needs help to secure stable accommodation), general housing options advice and rent arrears.

**Fig.15: Primary vulnerabilities and primary needs of clients approaching HART team 2013/15**

Primary Vulnerability	2013/14	2014/15	Primary Needs	2013/14	2014/15
Homeless/TA	154	61*	Eviction imminent	25	143
Mental health	93	142	Housing advice	16	90
Physical disability	89	72	Homelessness	29	72
Teen parent	8	60	Rent arrears	84	61
No needs	3	44	Forms/paperwork	37	29
Older person	16	13	Benefits/appeals	59	17
Drugs/alcohol	21	11	Move/MCIL	46	9
Learning disability	19	13	Other service need	17	7
Young person	9	13	Resettlement need	17	4
Domestic violence	3	6	Budget/life skills	56	6

<sup>20</sup> Internal records, Housing Referral and Access Team 2012-2015

Offenders	2	4	Tenancy support	14	3
Other	2	15	Other	22	12

Source: Internal HART records

*\*The reduction in the figure for homelessness for 2014/15 compared to the previous year is not an indication of fewer homeless/TA cases but the fact there were more cases with pronounced primary vulnerabilities, in particular mental health*

### 3.3.5 Employment and Skills support

Employment, education and development of skills are critical to ending the cycle of homelessness and poverty. Residents in employment are less likely to experience debt and social isolation while for households with children, attendance at school and participation in extra-curricular activities are the building blocks for social skills and obtaining technical knowledge to sustain employment in later life. Employment and education break the cycles of worklessness and homelessness.

The Government has taken the view that a key barrier to taking up employment in recent years has been the disincentives posed by low pay and benefit levels. The combination of welfare reform and the Work Programme has tried to address that imbalance.

As of September 2015 all young people are expected to remain in education or training up to the age of 18. Low aspirations have contributed to Barking and Dagenham having the highest percentage of 18-24 year olds claiming Jobseekers Allowance and rising numbers presenting as homeless due to familial eviction. Continued effort to get people into work has become crucial.

Barking and Dagenham's Employability Partnership embeds joint working with the Adult College, Barking and Dagenham College, Jobcentre Plus and the Government's Work Programme to feed through pathways into training, education and employment. Access to higher skills and higher incomes increases the chances of tenancy and home ownership sustainment reducing the risk of homelessness.

The Council's JobShop service provides a range of employment support to borough residents, working in partnerships with other providers. The service is a key referral option for housing officers working with homeless or potentially homeless residents. In the first half of 2015/16 the service assisted over 500 residents into work and apprenticeships. Professional in-work benefit advisors support residents to make informed choices about the benefits of work and can assist with the claiming of in-work support.

## 3.5 Support for Vulnerable People

The next section of the review looks at particular client groups, who in some cases may be owed a duty but often make up significant numbers of non-priority cases. The review examines current services provided to vulnerable cohorts.

### 3.5.1 General Youth Homelessness

Youth homelessness numbers presented to the Council are relatively small but have grown from 19 in 2012 to 118 in 2013 and 119 in 2014<sup>21</sup>. The surge has been through a loss of accommodation due to familial breakdown mainly with parents. The Council employ a social worker from the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for four days a week to help assess the housing options of vulnerable young people at risk of homelessness. This is particularly pertinent where the Council establishes it has duties to offer services or accommodation to a child in need under section 17 and section 20 of the Children's Act 1989 and has a protocol in place to deliver it.

In previous years shared accommodation support had been offered through the use of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) or through East Thames using The Foyer in Barking. But more recent procurement of suitable properties has not been successful and a rationalisation of assets by the Council has seen The Foyer utilised for much wider temporary accommodation.

Due to financial constraints the Council decommissioned The Foyer and a supported housing unit at Bevan House. However the Council has worked in partnership with East Thames and Look Ahead to facilitate a smooth transition supporting residents to relocate with Floating Support where necessary. The Council still maintains accommodation for mothers with babies at Summerfield House.

Reductions in funding have required the council to approach youths in crisis, holistically through integrated channels instead of through specialist officers. Those at risk will generally be identified through Multi-Agency Pathway Panels (MAPP), youth offending panels and the Troubled Families Programme. In half of the boroughs schools Parent Support Advisers have become an integral method of mediation and support mitigating against youth homelessness.

Integrated Youth Services sit on the borough's three MAP panels which serve to identify key workers for young people at risk of poor outcomes, including homelessness. IYS also acts as one of the delivery partners for the Troubled Families Programme, where risk of homelessness is one of the potential indicators. IYS has overall responsibility for the tracking and support of all 16-19 year olds who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Through 1-2-1 support

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<sup>21</sup> Internal records, Children's Services, 2012-2014

provided to these young people IYS are able to identify and address housing need which may be preventing the young person from developing their potential.

Where appropriate the Council has sign-posted customers to mediation services in the case of familial conflict; suggested private rented sector options and YMCA facilities as well as JobCentre Plus support. The borough encourages referrals to:

- counselling services such as those offered by the Listening Zone in Dagenham
- Night Stop which assists 16-25 year olds with the provision of emergency accommodation with local volunteers for one night or up to six weeks

However there is still scope for improving the integration of services to provide a positive gateway for youngsters at risk.

### ***Looked after children and care leavers***

Under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, the borough is responsible for the assessment and needs of looked after children aged 16-17 and other leavers of care from the ages of 18-21 (or 25 if still in full-time education). In 2014/15 the Council had responsibility for 65 16-17 year olds and 230 people of 18 years plus<sup>22</sup>. Of this cohort 20 were children of asylum seekers and 4 had high-level, high-cost disabilities.

The Council has reduced to zero the number of 16-17 year old care leavers housed in temporary accommodation and prioritised assisting clients in the preparation of applying for the Council's housing register. This is to fulfil their statutory duty to provide reasonable move-on accommodation when they leave care. The accommodation needs of the 16-17 cohorts are administered by specialist providers such as Advanced Care, Crossroads and Silver Birch.

To promote independent living the Leaving Care Team requires mandatory attendance at employment skills workshops, job fairs, education enrolment opportunities and activity with Jobcentre Plus. Attendance in 2014/15 was slightly under 50% suggesting more work is required to foster financial resilience which can sustain tenancies.

Due to high demand for social housing, a significant number of care leavers have been placed in shared accommodation to promote independent living. Procured through the private rented sector, the most suitable accommodation are houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).

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<sup>22</sup> Internal records, Children's Services 2014/15

Historically there have been 10 offers of social housing made each year with an average leaving care waiting list of 45. Ideally the service moves on clients by the age of 19 through offers of social housing or assured short-hold tenancy in the private rented sector but lack of supply has led to bottlenecks in accommodation. Care leavers over the age of 18 are staying longer in move-on accommodation such as HMOs, reducing available accommodation to the 16-17 cohort coming through the system. In turn accommodation costs are rising unsustainably.

**Fig.16: Number of looked after children under Barking and Dagenham’s care 2011/15**

Year	No. of Looked after Children
2011	232
2012	232
2013	212
2014	223
2015	222

Source: Internal records, Leaving Care team

### **Teenage parents**

Although Barking and Dagenham still has the highest teen pregnancy rate in London, it has fallen by 26% in the last fifteen years<sup>23</sup>. 154 under-18s conceived in 2014/15 and 59% ended in terminations.

The numbers of teenage parents and expectant mothers subject to the risk of homelessness is therefore relatively small, although the numbers continue to rise. The Family Nurse Partnership, the Baby Intervention and targeted personal advisors offer avenues of mediation and support.

**Fig.17: Number of teen parents reported as homeless 2012/15**

Year	No. of Homeless Teen Parents	Age of Homeless Teen Parents			
		16	17	18	19
2012/13	26	1	3	11	11
2013/14	32	0	3	21	8
2014/15	37	1	6	13	17

Source: P1E form on homelessness

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.barkinganddagenhamjsna.org.uk/Section7/Pages/Section7-17.aspx>



### **3.5.3 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender persons**

The Council is mindful of incidents of LGBT homelessness becoming more evident when previously it was considered a 'hidden' cause of homelessness and is working to capture more data in this area. The Council wishes to develop referrals for LGBT advice and support, particularly for young LGBT people and those suffering from domestic violence and abuse. There is currently a Public Health funded support programme for LGBT young people, Flipside, delivered by Integrated Youth Services. In addition, on its website the borough currently signposts support to the Albert Kennedy Trust and Stonewall for confidential advice.

### **3.5.5 People without recourse to public funds**

People with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) are deemed to be destitute persons from abroad subject to immigration controls which prevent them from accessing welfare entitlement, certain services and public housing. Categories of NRPF households include:

- Those entering the UK illegally and are unknown to the authorities
- Those entering the UK and overstayed on a student, spousal or visitor visa
- Those with limited leave to remain on condition that cannot claim public funds
- failed asylum seekers
- citizen of the European Economic Area subject to restrictions

The borough has a duty under the law to assist and advice NPRF households in finding pathways out of their destitution and in limited circumstances can offer accommodation and care services or financial support, particularly where children are concerned.

Since 2011 the number of cases have escalated and in October 2015 204 children of NRPF families were subject to section 17 assessments<sup>24</sup>. Although housing services has worked on behalf of Children's Services to reduce the temporary accommodation cost, there is a requirement to home these families during the lengthy assessment process which can average upto six months.

### **3.5.6 Supported Persons**

The Council's Adult Social Care team has been at the forefront of commissioning and procuring housing related services for many of the vulnerable groups generally found to be at risk of single persons homelessness. In 2012/13 the service assisted

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<sup>24</sup> Internal records, Children's Services 2015

4,889 clients and 3,862 in 2013/14. The Care Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to prevent, reduce and delay needs for care and support.

### ***Persons with learning disabilities***

Barking and Dagenham commissioned a two year contract in 2015 for nine units of supported housing for clients with high-level learning disabilities. Through referrals from the Community Learning Disabilities Team tenants are helped to manage their finances to sustain their tenancies and establish long-term independent living until such a time as move-on accommodation can be arranged through nomination rights to council or registered provider housing. The Council's HART team assisted 32 clients with learning disabilities in assessing their housing options<sup>25</sup>.

### ***Mental health***

There is a higher risk of vulnerability and homelessness among mental health clients, particularly those suffering with severe and enduring illnesses like dementia or schizophrenia meaning support in tenancy sustainment is a critical intervention.

The North East London NHS Foundation (NELFT) has a mental health team working with housing options to facilitate the discharge planning and accommodation options of clients through its Resource Allocation Management Panel (RAMP). The RAMP in conjunction with housing and commissioning services, reviews the recommendations and package proposed by the client's care co-ordinator which may involve residential care, a supported living scheme or a support in the community package

Protocols are also in place with local hospitals through the Care Programme Approach which co-ordinates the discharge process through King George's and Goodmayes, ensuring clients do not leave while being at risk of homelessness prior to a referral to housing services. The Housing Access and Referral Team dealt with 235 mental health clients between 2013/15 and the numbers continue to rise<sup>26</sup>.

However the need for mental health accommodation for specific cohorts is growing and the lack of 'step-down' properties in social or private rented stock for clients ready for independent living means they cannot be moved on, which creates bottlenecks for other clients. The borough's adult commissioning team and NELFT are undertaking a review of their current approach to mental health commissioning and housing-related provision.

### ***Domestic Violence***

During 2013/14 1,991 domestic violence crimes were reported to the police in the borough and it continues to have the highest domestic violence reported incident

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<sup>25</sup> Internal records, Housing Access and Referral Team 2012-2015

<sup>26</sup> Internal records, Housing Access and Referral Team 2012-2015

rate in London. The 2013 Government definition of domestic violence includes incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members. This can encompass psychological, emotional, physical, sexual abuse. This definition includes 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

Reducing domestic violence and abuse is at the centre of the revised draft Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy which aims to help deliver a coordinated community response model and MARACs (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) which:

- Increases survivor safety.
- Holds perpetrators accountable for their behaviour.
- Challenges the social tolerance of domestic violence

Despite the fact domestic violence in Barking and Dagenham is high, the number of cases of homelessness caused by it have been gradually falling as demonstrated in the accompanying table:

**Fig.18: Number of homeless cases caused by domestic violence 2010/15**

DV reason for accepted homelessness	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Violent relationship breakdown with partner	19	23	43	30	27
Violent relationship breakdown with associated person	4	2	12	10	10

One of the key elements of the preventing homelessness through domestic violence and abuse has been Barking and Dagenham's support of a Sanctuary Scheme run through Victim Support's Safer Homes Project and providing high level security improvements at the victim's property to prevent assailants from entering the home, such as change of locks, extra locks on doors and windows, fireproof letterboxes and stronger doors. There were 1,517 referrals from Sanctuary between 2010 and 2014:

**Fig.19: Number of persons at risk of homelessness but prevented through Sanctuary scheme 2010/15**

Homeless cases prevented by Sanctuary	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
	16	136	917	295	153

Source: P1E form on homelessness

## ***Troubled Families***

As a result of the civil disturbances across London in August 2011, the Government established a Troubled Families agenda with a focus on turning around the lives of Britain's most troubled families.

Between 2012/15, Troubled Families Phase 1 (TF1) worked with 645 families in the borough, a significant amount of whom had housing issues and the programme was able to reduce the demand on housing advice services. The Council had a 100% success with the cohort of families due to multiagency actions guided by a service level agreement with the Early Intervention team<sup>27</sup>.

In September 2014, the Government announced that 51 high performing local authorities in the current programme, including Barking and Dagenham, would start delivering the expanded programme ahead of national roll-out in April 2015 and it is our task to evidence that we will achieve significant and sustained progress with 492 families over the 5 year period from 2015/2020

The 6 criteria that we have identified as being significant for this borough are

- crime and antisocial behaviour
- poor health
- domestic violence and abuse
- children who need help
- poor school attendance
- unemployment

The scheme has had to evaluate sustained change within families evidenced by reduced demand on reactive services therefore achieving better value for money.

There are links between anti-social behaviour and wider housing issues. Housing organisations play a central role in reducing anti-social behaviour and linking with the housing department benefits all through the de-escalation of eviction proceedings and reduced repair bills.

## ***Prison client and ex-offenders***

There is a pressing need to provide advice and accommodation to prisoners, some of whom will suffer from mental health and others from a history of substance misuse. There is also a particular need to steer away young offenders and those with short sentences from the risk of re-offending. The borough uses Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) to take into consideration the housing needs of these clients as well as offering floating support via Probation Services and the Youth Offending Team.

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<sup>27</sup> Internal records, Children's Services 2012/15

Occasionally some council tenant clients will enter prison and housing services will only hold their accommodation for a maximum of three months and in arrears. Resettlement teams try and manage the process but clients with longer sentences will work with their link officer to see what options can be found with housing advice or alternatively with homeless charity St Mungos. Younger clients may be directed to DePaul UK London Night Shelter.

The Council currently commissions the Crime Reduction Initiative (CRI) and Addaction to create pathways away from addiction and offending through via a prison link worker and into housing through tenancy and budget training.

### ***Substance and alcohol misusers***

In 2014 there were an estimated 1,079 drugs users in Barking and Dagenham of which only 45% were assumed to be seeking treatment. CRI also tackles substance and alcohol misuse through a referral system for treatment or advice called the Recovery Management Service. With the support of Horizon, a structured day programme is offered to counsel clients. Clearly addictions can be critical causes leading to loss of accommodation and rough sleeping<sup>28</sup>.

### ***Older and physically disabled persons***

Historically there have been very low levels of older persons homelessness but demand for elderly adult social care is increasing as the older population is actually declining.

However promoting independence for older people is the corner stone of adult commissioning's strategy for delivery. In Barking and Dagenham there are 31 sheltered housing schemes over 23 sites designed for people aged 55 or over as well as those with physical disabilities.

Eight extra care schemes delivering 268 beds provide additional support to frail households while maintaining their independence.

***Fig.20: Extra care schemes operating in Barking and Dagenham 2015***

<b>Commissioned Extra Care Schemes</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Council Extra Care Schemes</b>	<b>Beds</b>
Harp House	36	Millicent Preston	33
Fred Tibble Court	31	Ted Hennem	41

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.barkinganddagenhamjsna.org.uk/Pages/jsnashome.aspx>

Colin Pond Court	31	George Crouch	31
Darcy House	52	Fews Lodge	13

Nursing and residential care places are also provided where sheltered or extra care provision is no longer a viable option. In 2014 the Council had 324 older persons living in independent care homes both inside and outside of the borough plus the availability of 37 care bed at Kallar Lodge which specialises in dementia.

The Council is reviewing its approach to older persons housing need by establishing an older person's pathway model and is due to be developed by April 2016.

### 3.5.7 Rough Sleepers

Rough sleepers cover a wide range of 'roofless' persons who are either sleeping or bedding down in the open air, buildings or places not designed for habitation. Rough sleepers tend to be in the most vulnerable categories of homeless often becoming roofless due to long-term mental health issues, crime, destitution, substance misuse or addiction. They have more likelihood of contracting communicable diseases such as tuberculosis or HIV and studies suggest that they live thirty years less than the average member of the public.

Housing legislation does not convey a duty upon the local authority to relieve rough sleeping but there is a very strong policy ethos to tackle the problem and good evidence for an early intervention in order to prevent it, which if left unaddressed can lead to complex or multiple needs developing for the individual that later place a burden on local authorities. The Government's No Second Night report in 2011 and the creation of the Mayor of London's Rough Sleeping Group in 2013 has prioritised action in the capital where rough sleeping has been increasing.

Rough sleepers may have very complex needs and in some cases are disengaged from local services and support networks leading to a chaotic lifestyle that exacerbates their problems. Although some present themselves to night shelters where they can be put on a pathway of referral to social, mental health and employment services, many remain hidden to protect themselves and therefore do not obtain the assistance they desperately require.

In comparison to the rest of London, Barking and Dagenham does not have high levels of rough sleeping but with the sub-region attracting migrants from eastern Europe looking for established communities and links, there has been an anecdotal rise in rough sleepers. Ascertaining a credible baseline for the level of rough sleeping is challenging and local authorities are dependent upon Street Count and CHAIN reporting to gauge the numbers in the borough:

- Street Count – a bi-annual ‘on-the-spot’ survey conducted with partner agencies to evaluate the level of rough sleeping by counting the number of rough sleepers on a given night in the borough
- Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) - real time reporting from agencies dealing with rough sleepers collated by St Mungos charity and funded by the Mayor of London

CHAIN monitoring categorises rough sleepers as ‘flow clients’ who have had no previous contact; ‘returner clients’ who have intermittent periods of rough sleeping and use of outreach services and ‘stock clients’ who tend to be regular uses of outreach support and likely to be permanent rough sleepers.

The socio-economic data of identified rough sleepers is not broken down by borough but the 2014/15 analysis of ‘outer boroughs’ (which includes Barking and Dagenham) suggested that 50% of rough sleepers were British and central and Eastern Europeans accounted for 29%. In all 79% of all rough sleepers were previously flow clients and had no previous contact with 8% being stock and 13% returners<sup>29</sup>.

However CHAIN can only be used an indicator as it generally only captures the male experience when female rough sleeping levels tend to be hidden. Through the ELHP, boroughs have been making awareness of the data risks of the count.

The following table shows the estimated number of rough sleepers in Barking and Dagenham compared to our sub-regional partners:

**Fig.21: Number of rough sleepers compared to east London sub-region 2011/15**

Borough	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
LBBB	17	12	14	27
Havering	7	18	11	25
Redbridge	57	83	83	121
Waltham Forest	46	72	75	118
Hackney	81	103	141	155
Newham	79	124	202	221

Source: Annual CHAIN reports

<sup>29</sup> <http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>

There has been anecdotal evidence of rising levels of rough sleeping in the past year and the Council has re-established a new Rough Sleepers Forum to review what has traditionally been a low-level form of homelessness in the borough.

The Forum is currently organising a fresh set of rough sleeping counts and ensuring that arrangements are in place to deal with homeless assessments. The group is establishing clear pathways for those requiring assistance; working up a plan for those ineligible for assistance; developing links with the emergency services; monitoring those not exercising their right to reside under the European treaties; developing services for rough sleepers as part of the Severe Weather Plan and through the Warmer Homes Healthy People run with CVS.



## 3.6 Temporary Accommodation

### 3.6.1 Overview of temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation is an interim solution provided by local authorities to satisfy the statutory duty to house homeless families until such time as that homelessness duty ends. Under the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 the accommodation must be suitable in terms of size, location and the health needs of the client. It must be properly managed, free of hazards and affordable. In particular families should not remain in bed and breakfast for longer than six weeks.

Such households are expected to pay rent and any other ancillary charges which may come with the accommodation. Some households will be eligible for housing benefit which may cover all or some of the costs.

There is no statutory cap on the length of time in which a homeless family may remain in temporary accommodation and the duty is owed until the client either:

- Moves out of their own accord or is no longer eligible for assistance
- Moves into settled accommodation arranged by the council
- Refuses a final offer of suitable settled accommodation
- Is evicted for arrears or anti-social behaviour

For the accounting quarter of March 2015 Barking and Dagenham ranked as seventeenth highest in the number of total households in temporary accommodation with 1,317 dwellings being used. This is still lower than all our sub-regional partners except Havering. The following chart shows the number of statutorily homeless households in temporary accommodation across the capital in comparison to the sub-region and Barking and Dagenham illustrating that the borough remains below the average:

**Fig.22: Numbers of statutory homeless in temporary accommodation by national ranking 2012/15**

Statutory Homeless in Temporary Accommodation	National Rank	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
Newham	1	3,302	2,877	2,633
Brent	2	3,161	3,341	3,249
Haringey	3	2,997	2,869	2,832
Croydon	4	2,770	2,161	2,414
Enfield	5	2,764	2,226	2,143
Barnet	6	2,758	2,401	2,372

Ealing	7	2,433	1,931	1,106
Westminster	8	2,397	2,283	2,450
Redbridge	9	2,152	2,063	2,113
Hackney	10	2,021	1,755	1,523
Tower Hamlets	11	2,007	1,935	1,845
Waltham Forest	12	1,990	1,469	1,325
Lambeth	13	1,865	1,533	1,276
Kensington & Chelsea	14	1,793	1,754	1,638
Lewisham	15	1,724	1,441	Not data
Brighton and Hove	16	1,456	1,266	1,064
<b>Barking &amp; Dagenham</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1,317</b>	<b>1,386</b>	<b>1,188</b>
Hammersmith & Fulham	18	1,197	1,139	1,203
Hounslow	19	1,108	1,087	1,067
Wandsworth	20	1,013	774	590

Source: DCLG Live Tables

The average length of stay in temporary accommodation ultimately depends on the availability and supply of suitable housing and the table below shows the average time spent between being placed in TA and being moved into permanent accommodation as of September 2015<sup>30</sup>. The average waiting time is 20 months.

**Fig.23: Average times spent in TA for homeless household in 2015:**

Waiting time	No. of cases
1 year	153
2 years	108
3 years	66
4 years	32
5 years	20
6 years	5
7 years	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>386</b>

Source: Internal records, Accommodation team

Although Barking and Dagenham succeeded in meeting the target of reducing use of temporary accommodation by 50% before March 2010, the pressures of welfare reform, housing need and limited affordable housing supply have seen TA figures rise ever since.

<sup>30</sup> Internal records, Accommodation Team 2015

Managing the growing demand for temporary accommodation against pressured budgets and in a highly competitive local housing market with spiralling rents has forced the Council to reassess its strategy of using such accommodation.

### 3.6.2 Supply of temporary accommodation

The Council has recently managed to rationalise some of its assets in the face of rising demand for temporary accommodation. The Council currently manages three hostel facilities, two of which were converted from former care homes for the elderly. A fourth hostel is due to open in February 2016 following the conversion of a former teacher's accommodation unit.

116 flats in The Foyer in Barking have been taken over by the Council and voids are utilised for temporary accommodation as residents are relocated. In addition, the Council makes best use of all properties either decanted or earmarked for regeneration as well as procuring dwellings and rooms through private sector leasing, bed and breakfast arrangements and nightly lets.

The following table presents the various accommodation options and numbers used in Barking and Dagenham in November 2015:

**Fig.24: Types of temporary accommodation used in Barking and Dagenham 2015**

Temporary Accommodation Type	No. Of Households	Description
Bed and Breakfast (B&B) and nightly let accommodation	77 – B&B 71 – nightly Lets	Last resort and emergency accommodation comprised of self-contained and shared facilities procured on a nightly let cost basis
Hostels	103	The Council owns and manages a mix of contained and non-contained hostels such as Riverside House, Butler Court, Boundary Road and Brockelbank Lodge
Private Sector Licensing (PSL)	891	Self-contained PRS accommodation leased by the Council through private landlords on guaranteed rent levels and managed by landlords/letting agents
GLA Empty Homes Programme units	13	Self-contained vacant PRS dwellings returned to use by GLA grant and managed by the Council on five year leases
Housing Association Leasing Scheme (HALS)	148	Self-contained accommodation leased by the Council from registered providers including Bevan House and The Foyer
Short-life housing	316	Decanted properties on estate renewal projects awaiting demolition

Source: Internal records, Accommodation team

The following table charts the overall rise in TA households and how the local authority has accommodated them. Note that the Council has continued to reduce use of B&B but sought to optimise its own assets for accommodation:

**Fig.25: Number of TA households and type of temporary accommodation they are housed in 2010/15**

Accommodation Type	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
B&B	42	154	180	65	47
Shared nightly lets	10	14	18	6	0
Self-contained nightly lets	0	0	18	107	91
Hostels	21	25	72	104	99
PSL/HALS	620	744	825	915	824
LA stock	0	144	146	189	256
Registered providers	8	0	1	0	0
Other	3	4	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>1260</b>	<b>1386</b>	<b>1317</b>

Source: P1E form on homelessness

### 3.6.3 Financial and supply pressures on temporary accommodation

The impact of welfare reform has driven up the number of crisis presentations made to housing advice services which has seen households placed in temporary accommodation rise by almost 49% in 2013/14 to 1,386. The figure dipped slightly in 2014/15 to 1,317 but will remain under pressure as the second phase of welfare caps and reductions kicks-in.

With reduced resources the Council is trying to cut the cost of temporary accommodation and find innovative solutions to dealing with demand but within budget. The Council has targeted B&B and nightly let rates for savings because it represents a very expensive form of TA and the problem has been exacerbated in recent years by other local authorities using Barking and Dagenham for preventative placements. To control spiralling nightly let rates and prevent other boroughs outbidding Barking and Dagenham for much sought after local accommodation, the borough has joined with London Councils and sub-regional partners in agreeing the London Inter Borough Accommodation Agreement (IBAA) which includes the introduction of a maximum nightly let rates. The Council has increasingly sought to use its own buildings to manage temporary accommodation, reduce the associated costs and generate rental income. The return of The Foyer to TA, the conversion of buildings for the use as hostels and numerous decant estates awaiting regeneration has generated income for the Housing Revenue Account.

### ***Estate Renewal and Decant Programme***

However significant progress on estate renewal regeneration schemes has added additional pressure. The removal of these general needs properties, the need for alternative decant properties and the subsequent loss of short-life dwellings for temporary accommodation has exacerbated the problem of supply.

Estate renewal schemes on Gascoigne East, Gascoigne West and Sebastian Court requires the movement of 274 tenants and the provision of alternative accommodation. In addition 28 households in temporary accommodation need to be rehoused. Further regeneration schemes in Gascoigne, Thames View and Rainham Road South are expected to be completed by 2021 and will also require the movement of 878 tenants. This is to be managed in small programmes, working with housing providers to house some of the decants on new schemes as they progress.

### ***Private Rented TA***

The cost of private sector licensing arrangements has also posed significant financial burden in recent years leading to the Council retendering its contract for leased properties in 2014 and approving a new framework of 17 managing agents to source and manage suitable quality properties which offer value for money.

The procurement of Bed and Breakfast accommodation has also for the first time been through a price reduction exercise, which has helped to significantly reduce the nightly costs of placements.

The borough strives to remain resourceful and is testing the feasibility of establishing a local lettings agency. Based on a similar model to Reside, the Council's letting arm to working families on affordable rents, the agency would act as part of the preventative strategy by sourcing (and managing) a new tranche of private sector rented properties for rent deposit and homeless prevention, thereby reducing administrative costs for the local authority.

While the cost of temporary accommodation presents one challenge, the provision of new supply is just as formidable. Landlords are increasingly reluctant to lease or renew tenancies to tenants on capped benefits. With rising house prices, landlords are looking at either realising their assets or tapping into the burgeoning and attractive professional rental market with higher rental yields. The Council has sought to address the matter by offering competitive incentives to increase supply whilst adhering to the Local Housing Allowance rate to encourage and maintain PRS supply and avoid nightly lets.

#### **3.6.4 Bed and Breakfast Accommodation**

The borough has sought to reduce its reliance on B&B and this is encouraged by the legal requirement not to house families in such accommodation for any longer than six weeks and in the case of 16 and 17 year olds never at all.

Since 2013 the Council has reduced dependency on B&B within borough boundaries but it has become necessary to utilise accommodation in neighbouring boroughs, mainly in Redbridge and Newham. This arrangement is adherent to the IBAA and monitored on a weekly basis.

### **3.6.5 Sub-Regional Approach to Temporary Accommodation and the IBAA**

The London Inter Borough Accommodation Arrangement (IBAA) became operative in April 2014 as a means to govern how all 32 boroughs and the city corporation discharged their homeless duty into TA throughout the capital, outside of their own municipal boundaries.

Information is collected every month from each borough about where placements are made, the number, the type and kind of accommodation procured, all bar placements made by social services.

To mitigate the cost of rising London rents and prevent borough's outbidding each other for precious accommodation resource, the IBAA protocols agreed by housing directors placed a cap on maximum nightly let rates. In Barking and Dagenham this arrangement also allowed for an increase in PSL properties becoming available for local as opposed to pan-London usage.

With east London having some of the cheapest private rents in London, particularly Barking and Dagenham and Waltham Forest, the sub-region has become a net importer of placements from across the capital.

Since 2013 however there has been a significant decline in placements from west London councils like Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea and a surge in temporary accommodation being sought by east sub-regional partners. West London placements have dropped from 51% to 26% while east London has climbed from 49% to 65% - with the largest net contributors being Redbridge, Newham and Waltham Forest. By 92% the majority of the other borough placements into Barking and Dagenham are emergency lets as opposed to a discharge of the homeless duty into settled accommodation<sup>31</sup>.

The table illustrates the annual number of pan-London placements in each sub-regional partner:

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<sup>31</sup> IBAA quarterly returns, produced by the Royal Borough of Greenwich

**Fig.26: Pan-London placements in east London sub-region 2012/14**

<b>Borough</b>	<b>2012/13 Placements</b>	<b>2013/14 Placements</b>
Redbridge	772	1119
Hackney	620	814
Newham	586	748
Waltham Forest	544	671
<b>Barking and Dagenham</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>510</b>
Havering	113	153
Tower Hamlets	108	146

Source: IBAA reports

## 3.7 Housing Supply

### 3.7.1 Choice Homes and Allocations

#### Overview

Choice Homes is Barking and Dagenham's choice-based lettings scheme run by housing advice and open to residents enlisted to the borough's housing register. Applicants can bid for social, affordable or housing association properties in a borough location of their choice.

The Localism Act 2011 allowed the Council to review and revise its allocations scheme to take into account local considerations of how best it manages a diminishing supply of stock. With new supply being delivered slowly and Right to Buy approvals on the rise, it allowed the borough to amend its allocation scheme to efficiently allocate stock to the highest need households.

Applicants must be over 18 years of age and meet a residency qualification of residing in Barking and Dagenham for at least three years, continue to reside and fall into a reasonable preference category. Exceptions to the qualifying person's criteria include:

- some victims of domestic violence
- accepted referrals under the MAPP and National Witness Mobility Scheme
- applicants owed a homeless duty under part 7 and that duty is ongoing
- categories of the armed forces and associated family
- applicants whose application would attract additional preference

These reforms have substantially reduced access to the housing register cutting eligible numbers from 14,500 in 2014 to 7,000 in 2015. 6,000 applicants with no identified need have been removed and another 1,400 registrants living outside of the borough have been filtered out effectively allowing supply to be targeted at higher categories of local need<sup>32</sup>.

**Fig. 27: Lettings by bedroom size by LBB and registered providers in 2014**

Bedroom size	LBB lettings (1,063)	RP lettings (166)	Grand total (1,048)
1-bed	421	27	448
2-bed	414	50	464
3-bed	218	87	305
4-bed	10	1	11
5-bed	0	1	1

<sup>32</sup> Internal records, Choice Homes team 2015



## ***Reasonable Preferences***

Tailoring together the personal circumstances of the applicant, bedroom size requirements and the level of housing need, the level of priority will be determined. The borough is under a legal duty to give reasonable preference to following households:

- Homeless persons within the meaning of the Housing Act 1996, as amended
- Homeless persons owed certain duties by any authority until such time the duty ceases
- Persons occupying insanitary, unsatisfactory or overcrowded housing
- Persons who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including domestic violence
- Persons who need to move to an area to give or receive care where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or to others

The Localism Act 2011 provides local authorities the flexibility to introduce non-statutory reasonable preferences. To reflect a local priority of this borough and to support central governments agenda on worklessness, the Council have introduced a non-statutory reasonable preference if an applicant and / or partner included on the application is in work.

## ***Right to Move***

Local authorities must not disqualify social tenants seeking to transfer from another district where it is satisfied that the tenant needs, rather than wishes, to move for work related reasons.

## ***Discharge into the private rented sector***

The Localism Act allows local authorities to bring their main homelessness duty to an end by discharging the duty into the private rented sector. The PRS offer must be an assured shorthold tenancy of a minimum of 12 months. If there is a further incidence of homelessness occurring within two years of accepting the offer, there may be an ongoing duty to provide accommodation.

## ***Reside and Affordable Rent housing options***

Recognising the need to create a range of solutions to deliver housing options the Council as a landlord and in partnership with other providers and lenders is delivering affordable rent options at 65%-80% of the rental market value.

Reside, a joint purpose vehicle, was created to recognise the need for the provision of affordable housing of working households—It currently offers 477 dwellings across sites such as the William Street Quarter and Thames View East. Abbey Road Phase 2 is set to join the portfolio with an additional 144 homes. Properties are let, managed and maintained by the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham and

offered on longer term assured shorthold tenancies, subject to satisfactory management of an initial 12 month tenancy.

To be eligible the working applicant must have sufficient households income to afford rental payments. The income threshold will vary across developments around the borough as well as the size of the properties available.

### **Overcrowding, Under Occupation and the Bungalows Scheme**

The need to be more efficient with housing stock led to dedicated efforts to reduce overcrowding and under occupation by the Choice Homes team. This has become even more important with the advent of welfare reform. As part of preventing growing homeless numbers, the Council has identified those likely to be impacted and where possible encouraged downsizing to free up larger homes.

The team facilitated 435 moves between 2010 and 2015, 72 of which were under the Seaside and Country Home scheme for those aged 60 or over, thereby freeing up more than 650 bedrooms. 33 households were directly affected by the reduction in the Spare Room Rate in housing benefit<sup>33</sup>.

An additional 37 households were moved to bungalows designed for pensioners with a second phase of thirty four newly built bungalows due for occupation. Households which gave up the largest properties were prioritised.

Additionally the Council has used its Mutual Exchange service to encourage households to move out of under-occupation. 622 households have utilised the service since 2009/14:

**Fig.28: Mutual exchanges in Barking and Dagenham 2009/15**

<b>Mutual exchanges</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Total dwellings let through mutual exchanges	68	61	107	128	183	75

Source: P1E form on homelessness

### **3.7.2 Private Rented Sector (PRS):**

Not unlike the rest of the capital, Barking and Dagenham’s PRS sector has seen a remarkable surge in the last decade, quadrupling from a base of 4,220 in 2003 to 12,000-14,000 dwellings today representing 17% of total housing stock<sup>34</sup>.

Burgeoning growth and evidence of significant levels of sub-standard rental accommodation flowing into the private lets market required the Council to take

<sup>33</sup> Internal records, Choice Homes team 2010-2015

<sup>34</sup> Internal records, Private Sector Licensing team, 2015 and Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2011 by Ecorys

action. Our Private Sector Stock Condition Survey in 2010<sup>35</sup> estimated that 41% of PRS tenants were vulnerable households in receipt of benefit; 15% of dwellings were considered to be fuel poor due to poor thermal comfort and 47% of stock was deemed to be non-decent with a quarter suffering from disrepair, hazards or inadequate warmth.

The borough values the essential resource PRS properties bring to the local housing market but equally stresses the need for local residents to be assisted in living in safe and well managed homes, especially with substantial numbers being used as emergency and temporary accommodation for homeless households.

To facilitate an improved market in quality accommodation the Council used the Housing Act 2004 to introduce a borough-wide mandatory licensing scheme in September 2014 requiring all landlords operating in the borough to be registered as fit and proper persons eligible to manage stock and letting accommodation which met basic decency. This was paralleled with a growth in landlords registered as accredited to the London Landlords Accreditation Scheme (LLAS), the creation of a proactive Landlords Forum and the conduct of quarterly surveys of letting agents in which to gauge an analysis of trends, prices and problems in the local private rental market.

This corresponds with the Mayor of London's Housing Covenant for Private Renters in 2012 and the adoption of the Mayor's London Rental Standard into the London Landlords Accreditation Scheme in 2013.

In terms of homelessness, the strategy and review have already referenced the contraction in supply caused by a decline in landlords interested in supporting temporary accommodation. It will be important in the next five years for the Council to take a lead role in working with private sector landlords to ensure that a balance is met between the demands of a buoyant private sector market and the duty in relation to homelessness.

Recent surveys of the local letting agents suggest that this will become ever more acute even before the second phase of welfare reform has begun to take effect. The September 2015 surveys showed that average median rent for private sector properties was up to £1,231 per month, an 8% rise since the beginning of the year and the highest the borough has recorded since it started the surveys in 2010 with 64% of letting agents expecting rents to rise again over the next quarter. The length of most tenancies has shifted markedly to over three years with 68% of tenants opting for security of their existing accommodation rather than looking for new premises.

Letting agents also reported an entrenched decline in landlords accepting housing benefit claimants explaining that 92% of recent lets were to in-work tenants clearly

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<sup>35</sup> Barking and Dagenham Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey by CPC Ltd

pitching to the higher rental bracket. The survey continued to illustrate the existing pattern of lack of supply with 50% of landlords having no void properties on their books and the remaining 50% having four or less awaiting repairs for the next occupation. Ninety two per cent recorded acceleration in demand for rental accommodation<sup>36</sup>.

### 3.7.3 New Affordable Housing

The borough's Draft Local Plan<sup>37</sup> estimates that Barking and Dagenham has the capacity to provide 35,000 new homes over the next 15 years and has already been set the target to deliver 1,236 properties a year in the Mayor's London Plan<sup>38</sup>. 40% are should be affordable splitting in tenure with 60% at market rent level, 24% at social rent and 16% at intermediate.

2011 Housing Needs Survey identified the need for an additional 1,333 new affordable homes every year, particularly around family-sized accommodation. By 2013 the Council committed to projects which over the next four years aim to have delivered 1,636 new affordable homes of mixed tenure ranging from social, intermediate and affordable rents as well as shared ownership dwellings.

Since 2009/10 the borough has produced 1,976 new affordable homes including the following flagship schemes since 2012:

**Fig.29: Council new-build affordable homes schemes 2012/15**

Scheme	No. of units	Tenure breakdown
William Street Quarter	201	65%-80% Market Rent
Thames View East	276	50%, 65%-80% market rent
Alex Guy Gardens	26	50% market rent
Luke Alsop Square	12	50% market rent
Abbey Road Phase 1	134	57% and 80% market rent
Goresbrook Village	98	50% market rent
Rainham Road South	29	65% market rent

<sup>36</sup> Barking and Dagenham Quarterly Letting Agents Survey – September 2015

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building-control/planning-guidance-and-policies/local-plan-review/one-borough-one-community-one-plan/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/current-london-plan>

Barking Riverside has become the Council's most ambitious growth opportunity delivering one of the UK's largest housing developments with planning approval for 10,800 new homes. Further estate renewal is expected to widen housing choice across the following schemes by 2016:

**Fig.30: Affordable housing schemes pipeline**

Scheme	No. of units	Tenure breakdown
Leys Estate Phase 1	70	50%-65% market rent
Marks Gate Site 1	56	50% market rent
Marks Gate Sites 2-3	28	65% market rent
Bungalow portfolio (assorted sites)	34	50% market rent
North Street	14	Potential shared ownership
Leys Estate Phase 2	69	Shared ownership and 50%-65% rent
Abbey Road Phase 2	144	To be confirmed
Gascoigne Phase 1	421	Mixed for sale, shared ownership and 50%-80% market rents

Up to 14% of the new homes target has been identified for the Barking Town Centre area. As a result the GLA has designated Barking Town Centre as a Housing Zone and awarded £42.3m of funding to assist this. The Council is committed to deliver 1,000 new homes by 2018 and over 4,000 within a 10 year period from this area.

The Draft Local Plan's Options and Issues Paper is currently out for public consultation and seeks to address the number of dwellings built and types of affordable housing the borough should produce in the next fifteen years and this will significantly broaden the offer of housing choice for residents.

## 5.Homelessness Strategy Objectives 2016/21

The Homeless Review 2015 set out context, identified trends in homelessness and examined the services and interventions employed to prevent homelessness in the first instance and tackle crisis presentations when they occurred.

However planning services for the next five years requires an appreciation of the current and emerging trends:

- Second phase of welfare reform is likely to create greater demand
- Loss of private rented sector accommodation is squeezing available supply
- Parental ejection from the home is on an upward trajectory
- Rough sleeping appears to be on the rise
- Lone parent households in priority need have increased dramatically
- Demand for supported housing options and services is developing

Tackling these problems has to be balanced against diminishing resources and the cultivation of a different ethos to housing crisis resolution. This has to recognise:

- Local authority resources are likely to be squeezed much further
- Prevention initiatives and self-resolution will be critical in managing demand
- Housing advice services will have to be creative and integrated
- That resources and support has to be targeted at the most acute circumstances
- Partnerships with external providers and the voluntary sector needs to become robust
- Innovation in housing supply and choice is essential

Despite the financial constraints, the borough aspires to continually improve its housing advice services and ensure that our approach to homelessness is fit-for-purpose and creates a customer journey that provides appropriate housing solutions.

As part of this process, the Council will be seeking Gold Standard accreditation for its services in 2016, of which this homelessness review and the strategic actions below form the strategy going forward.

The borough seeks to entrench initiatives and approaches which work well in reducing, preventing or attending to homelessness while modernising services, approaches and tackling gaps where more can be done to improve outcomes.

## **OBJECTIVE ONE: Reducing demand through prevention**

### **Outcomes:**

<b>1.1</b>	<b>Homelessness prevented through housing support, advice and initiatives for vulnerable and at risk households</b>
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Encouraging self-resolution of housing crises</b>
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Co-ordinated multiagency interventions to assist households affected by the second phase of welfare reform</b>
<b>1.4</b>	<b>Increased access to employment support for families and young people</b>

### **1.1 Homelessness prevented through housing support, advice and initiatives for vulnerable and at risk households**

- **Maintain Rent Deposit/Rent Advance funding for suitable tenants**

The Rent Deposit Scheme has assisted 758 households since 2008 and allows Barking and Dagenham to act as an introductory agent with landlords offered up to four weeks rent as a deposit and up to four weeks rent in advance in agreement for a year long tenancy. To encourage landlords, a cash incentive for renewing the tenancy or extending it is offered to keep the household in situ for two years or more. The Council intends to maintain the scheme as an active and proven tool of homelessness prevention but will continue to review the scheme in light of market changes.

- **Continue to monitor the court duty representation scheme which assists home owners and tenants at risk of possession**

Barking and Dagenham previously funded the role of a court advocacy advisor who attended court to protect vulnerable homeowners subject to possession proceedings, from eviction. This was transferred to Edward Duthie Solicitors in partnership with the Citizen's Advice Bureau and the Council wish to continue its support for the service and the role it plays in the prevention of homelessness.

- **Marry up support between the voluntary sector and Private Sector Housing services to deliver swifter remedial action and support against illegal evictions and harassment**

The significance of PRS as a housing choice and homeless solution was recognised with the introduction of the Landlords Mandatory Licensing Scheme in 2014. Driving up standards of management and the quality of accommodation is an essential part of ensuring a sustainable supply of private rented accommodation.

However with rising homelessness attributed to the loss of assured shorthold tenancies, the Council's private sector housing services will have to forge a closer relationship with the voluntary sector organisations which are often the first to be contacted for advice on illegal evictions and harassment. Official Council interventions are small, but many clients, threatened with loss of security of tenure and a risk of homelessness, have presented themselves to the Citizens Advice Bureau and its Community Legal Action Centre.

Referrals pathway needs to be developed between the voluntary sector and the local authority, even if the Council has no statutory role to fulfil. It should be made aware of alleged bad practices and can log and investigate landlords as part of its Licensing regime and potentially enforce an Interim Management Order (IMO) upon the property.

- **Agree a RSL eviction protocol setting out how the council and RSLs take every measure to prevent evictions**

The Council is seeking to develop a protocol with fellow housing associations setting out the triggers and measures taken in the first instance to prevent eviction following the second phase of welfare reform. As a key element of homeless prevention the protocol will require our partners to evict only in the last resort and only where the tenant refuses to seek support or advice from the Council, the RSL or a relevant voluntary sector pathway. The protocol will allow those requiring assistance on debt, income maximisation, addiction or other suitable housing pathways to maintain at-risk tenancies.

- **Develop an innovative Homelessness Prevention Fund**

Trusting staff to be innovative and creative in tackling homelessness allows for blue skies thinking and the borough will develop a small homelessness innovation fund to allow front-line staff to prepare business cases for preventative solutions which can be trialled.



- **Increase the ‘Dispelling the Myth’ programme on housing options and lettings**

The Housing Options team will roll-out their ‘Reality Check’ programme across secondary schools, Sumerfield House and The Vineries to encourage youngsters to think of wider housing solutions, debunking the myths surrounding pregnancy and access to social housing, issues around parental exclusion and encouraging self-reliance.

- **‘Early Rent Alert’ scheme in partnership with Children’s Services**

Working with Landlord Services, the Rent Arrears Eviction Panel seeks to prevent homelessness before a crisis presentation becomes imminent however this tends not be the case with some families who end up in arrears but are owed a duty by Children’s Services. It is proposed that those families are identified early by the Rents team as being at risk of serious arrears and are supported and advised on how to avoid losing their accommodation.

- **Development of Homeless Prevention Improvement Plan**

To compliment the overarching themes and strategic objectives of the Homelessness Strategy, the Housing Options team will devise an annual Homeless Prevention Improvement Plan to monitor performance and implement innovative ways to tackle the risk of homelessness.

The team is already revising its approach to dealing with tenants who lose their abode due to the service of section 21 notices and parental ejection; working with charitable providers and liaising more strongly with the private rented market in relation to shared accommodation

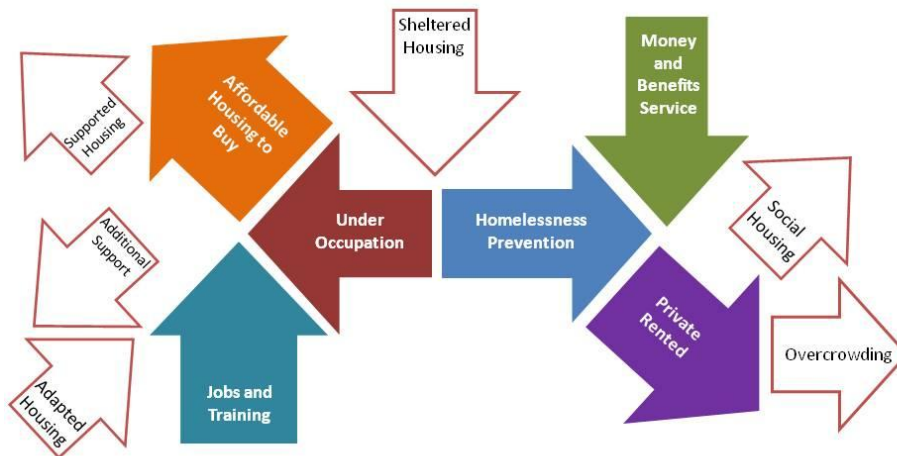
## **1.2 Encouraging self-resolution of housing crises**

- **Delivery of an Enhanced Housing Options tool to allow clients to self-help**

Barking and Dagenham is developing an Enhanced Housing Options tool to create a far more effective and efficient customer gateway for households who may be at risk of homelessness, particularly young persons. Clients will be able to find housing options personalised to their own circumstances without having to wait for an appointment or applying to the Choice Homes scheme.

An online assessment will allow the client to assess the full suite of housing choices available to them including homelessness prevention, affordable housing to buy, private rent, social housing, jobs and training advice and income maximisation support.

**Fig.31: Referral routes through the enhanced housing options tool**



The tool acts as a first port-of-call which will mitigate against increasing volumes of approaches to John Smith House and makes it clear from the outset that social housing is not the first and only choice

- **Continue to promote the BanD Together Routemaster service**

The borough will continue to support the BanD Together routemaster of services which allows residents to seek their own education, employment and training solutions through the suite of general and specialist providers such as the Richmond Fellowship for mental health clients, Bridges into Work run by East Thames and the Osborne Partnership for residents with learning disabilities

### **1.3 Co-ordinated multiagency interventions to assist households affected by the second phase of welfare reform**

- **Prepare for universal credit and the second phase of welfare reform and identify those most likely to be impacted**

Ensuring housing officers and lettings teams understand the implications of the new system will put them in a stronger position to identify tenants at risk. Under the first phase of welfare reform the Council and its RSL partners identified those most likely to be impacted by welfare reductions and the introduction of Universal Credit. It has already recognised the risk around tenants juggling multiple priorities in their budgets during the impending second phase of welfare reform.

To prevent the risk of homelessness, the Council will continue to prepare staff, landlords and residents for the wider implementation of Universal Credit and further benefit reductions as legislation passes through Parliament.

### **1.4 Increased access to employment support for families and young people**

- **Improve information on skills, learning and jobs and help more residents into sustainable employment**

Ensuring access into the jobs market and sustaining employment helps residents build their financial resilience, well-being and increases the likelihood of keeping up with rental and mortgage payments. The borough's Employability Partnership is the forum for joint planning between the Council and educational providers like the Adult College and Barking and Dagenham College and advisors such as Jobcentre Plus to provide training offers and clear pathways to employment and career progression. Tackling youth unemployment, long-term unemployment and enhancing support for claimants of income support or disability benefits are key areas of joint activity.

The borough also intends to maintain a network of employment support and job brokerage based on JobShop actively supporting tenants and residents including those in receipt of Discretionary Housing Payments who continue to assist and develop themselves. The employment and skills team is actively working with a wide range of local and sub-regional partners to secure European Social Fund monies to enhance local support for key priority groups.

## **OBJECTIVE TWO: Enabling pathways away from homelessness**

### **Outcomes:**

**2.1 Re-established Homelessness Forum**

**2.2 A successful partnership with external providers and the voluntary sector providing financial resilience, mediation and support for those suffering from homelessness**

**2.3 Greater tenancy sustainment across all tenures**

**2.4 More effective identification of hidden homelessness, in particular rough sleepers and LGBT persons**

**2.5 Utilised sub-regional partnerships such as the ELHP to tackle vulnerable single persons homelessness**

### **2.1 Re-established Homelessness Forum**

- **Re-establish the Homelessness Forum facilitated by the Council but run independently**

The Homelessness Forum, comprised of statutory, voluntary and health partners, was previously the essential body which oversaw the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy and explored key areas for work and development. Originally established in 2004, it faltered through lack of resources and no consistent guidance.

The Council will identify key voluntary sector partners who are willing to independently chair the Forum and give it the external scrutiny and the leadership it requires. The Forum will meet in early 2016 and is seen as a key driver for the borough's commitment to continuous improvement of the homelessness service and in obtaining and retaining its anticipated Gold Standard accreditation.

## **2.2 A successful partnership with external providers and the voluntary sector providing financial resilience, mediation and support for those suffering homelessness**

- **Develop clear voluntary sector referral pathways for vulnerable clients identified as at risk**

A key purpose of the Homelessness Forum will be the creation of a much stronger bond between the council's services and the voluntary sector which often cater for those who are most at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping. Organisations like the Citizens Advice Bureau, the CVS, Hope 4 Barking and Dagenham and Oasis night shelter projects, the Independent Living Agency, the Credit Union and DADB to name but a few provide essential advice and immediate support for vulnerable clients. Running many of the borough's social support programmes such Warmer Homes Healthy People, the voluntary sector has first contact when dispensing warm packs, income and debt support, private rented tenancy advice and night shelters.

However there is a need for a co-ordinated referral network where third sector partners can reliably forward individuals or households deemed as vulnerable and at risk to the appropriate teams and services available in the Council. There is evidence that in some cases this is beginning to happen but services need to be universally mapped and referral routes need to be developed and agreed to ensure appropriate systems are in place to assist those with complex needs at risk of homelessness.

- **Develop RSL partnerships to deliver cost effective supported accommodation**

Housing associations remain a key stakeholder in the borough's strategic delivery of housing including the provision of supported accommodation and associated services. During 2016, adult social care commissioning are to review existing arrangements in the provision of housing support for mental health, extra care, learning disabilities and young people. This review may have clear implications for homeless prevention.

The reviews are to take into consideration the Council's commitment to enabling social responsibility and independent living. Examining the role of providers, floating support packages and move-on arrangements the Council is looking for cost effective supported accommodation which emphasises the importance of personalisation of budgets where relevant.

As a result the Council is to:

- Review sheltered accommodation and extra care
- Develop a paper of housing options for persons with learning disabilities
- Examine floating support provided to younger persons
- Investigate innovative housing solutions for mental health clients including modular build and shared accommodation

### **2.3 Greater tenancy sustainment across all tenures**

- **Ingrain ‘good tenancy’ practices for social tenants, rent deposit clients and PRS tenants to help clients manage their finances and sustain their tenancies**

Understanding a tenancy and how to manage it during times of financial difficulty or personal hardship is often the critical element of sustaining a tenancy and ultimately preventing homelessness. The Council has developed a ‘how to be a good tenant’ mandatory training session for those it offers a rent deposit or rent in advance too. This ensures that a landlord receives tenants who are fully appraised of their rights and responsibilities and are equipped to manage tenancy problems should they ever arise.

The borough will explore the development of a tenant training package, possibly with the voluntary sector to support landlords who house PRS tenants and TA tenants on behalf of the Council for guidance about their responsibilities. If the pilots work, the scheme could be opened up to council and housing association tenants deemed suitable for guidance.

- **Draft tenancy guides produced for the private rented sector**

Barking and Dagenham is working in partnership with a leading building society to market a new tenants guide specifically to encourage good tenancy sustainment and easy access to advice for those seeking private rented accommodation for the first time. The borough will specifically use this guide to encourage wider housing solutions for those who have traditionally just preferred social housing as the only available option.

## **2.4 More effective identification of hidden homelessness, in particular rough sleepers and LGBT persons**

- **Early identification of the risk to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) persons at risk of becoming homeless**

Growing anecdotal evidence suggests that there is rising homelessness linked to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender discrimination. This is particularly pertinent to young people and also in some BME communities. At risk are those where families have rejected or found it hard to come to terms with the gender identification or sexual orientation of the individual.

This is a new area of identification for the Council which will work with the voluntary sector and approach registered providers and appropriate charities to examine how best to identify this vulnerable group in the first instance. This will allow the borough to explore the commissioning implications of providing support which could take the pressure off housing and social services.

- **Minimise rough sleeping through partnership interventions to ensure No Second Night Out (NSNO) for single homeless people**

In light of the anecdotal evidence of increasing rough sleepers in Barking and Dagenham the borough is to review its approach to tackling the problem and how it interacts with partners delivering refuge and support at the sharp end. Rough sleeper identification is a key issue to be addressed, providing for a robust process of referral where move-on can be encouraged and support for complex needs administered.

The borough will use the new Homelessness Forum to prioritise the ad hoc work of the rough sleepers group and conduct a fresh analysis of rough sleeping in the borough inclusive of the work provided by Thames Reach, No Second Night Out, London Street Rescue, Independent Living Agency, the Salvation Army, Hope 4 Barking and Dagenham night shelters and the dedicated police team. A new street count will be authorised in late 2015 and future work will include specific emphasis upon mental health, LGBT issues and international reconnection. The Council will evaluate the multi-agency outcomes of the Operation Alabama approach used in neighbouring boroughs in partnership with Thames Reach, the police and UK Border to assess what learning Barking and Dagenham can employ.

## **2.5 Utilised external partnerships to support vulnerable single persons who are homeless**

- **Support the East London Housing Partnership bid for single homeless project**

Resources for single homelessness across the capital have been diminishing for some time and with growing numbers making approaches to housing advice services, initiatives by partner organisations to provide assistance must be encouraged.

Barking and Dagenham will continue to support East London Housing Partnership bids for external resource and in particular its bid for Big Lottery Funding for a new single homelessness project.

- **Debt management and mentoring project for single homeless persons**

LESS crisis funding ceased this year but part of the remaining budget has been approved for a pilot debt management and monitoring project run by CAB to help single homeless young persons cope with crisis and create a pathway to independent living throughout 2016.



## **OBJECTIVE THREE: Create Integrated Services at First Contact**

### **Outcomes:**

<b>3.1</b>	<b>Gold Standard accreditation for Housing Options</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Co-ordinated 'single pathways' protocols, procedures and mapping between housing, adult commissioning, children's services and health services</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Development of one-stop shop approach to housing services such as Housing+ model</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Joint commissioning of services to provide seamless housing options to all clients</b>

### **3.1 Gold Standard accreditation for housing options services**

- **Aim for Gold Standard accreditation for housing options services**

To achieve the continuous improvement of our housing advice function, we are committed to developing a Gold Standard Housing Options service recognised by the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS). The borough needs to meet ten local challenge targets which thread multiagency actions to tackle homelessness, support vulnerable households, work with the private sector, engage with the voluntary sector and provide pathways out of homelessness for all client groups affected. The service is seeking to benchmarking its provision using the Gold Standard self-assessment toolkit in January 2016.

- **Review housing advice structure and prevention services to improve customer journey and ensure fit for purpose**

To ensure that the housing advice service is responsive to the ever changing market, remains fit for purpose and seeks to continually improve the customer journey, the Council is reviewing its current structure through the Housing Transformation Programme with recommendations for reform to be made in early 2016.

- **Consider more invest-to-save bids to improve the service**

An invest-to-save bid in 2014 allowed for the recruitment of staff to collect rent arrears from residents in temporary accommodation. The adoption of a robust collection procedure through visits and utilising technology to receive payment online and by telephone significantly reduce the 50% arrears rate of those in temporary accommodation. The Council will explore further invest-to-save initiatives to deliver quality services and create savings for the General Fund.

### **3.2 Co-ordinated ‘single pathways’ protocols, procedures and mapping between housing, adult commissioning, children’s services and health services**

- **Review all protocols and procedures between NELFT, mental health, adult commissioning, children’s services and housing options to create a seamless integrated process for clients**

Across the board of adult and children social care services, protocols were agreed to provide effective referral routes and quotas of social housing for adults, families and young people assessed as priority need or at risk but who could be supported to live independently free of specialised support – including those suffering from chronic mental illness, severe learning disabilities and persons recovering from long-term substance misuse.

Elements of these protocols need to be reviewed and refreshed to reflect their effectiveness in delivering outcomes as part of wider strategy looking at housing-related services for vulnerable and supported households.

- **Mandatory attendance at a bi-annual conference between children’s, adults and housing staff to explore processes, cases and legal changes to provide consistent service**

The complexity and ever changing nature of social care legislation has occasionally led to a disconnect between commissioning services and housing, with the unintended consequence of leaving vulnerable clients in inappropriate housing situations at great cost to the Council.

There is a service wide agreement that mandatory bi-annual conferences should be held between mental health, adult social care, children’s services and housing staff to prepare, brief and engage frontline workers in policy and

legislative changes which may impact upon their personal delivery of seamless services to clients.

- **Consider appointing a referral officer who understands all of the social services links, assessments and legislation to ensure seamless approach to complex cases**

A key disconnect in present service delivery exists between housing and social care services when it comes to who is owed a duty, when, by whom and under which legislation. Housing support is a duty owed under different circumstances by different services under disparate laws ranging from the Housing Act 1996 as amended, the Children's (Leaving Care) Act 2000, the Children's Act 1989, the Mental Health Act 1983, Care Act 2014 and the National assistance Act 1948.

There is currently not a seamless service between housing and children's services in particular despite multi-agency engagement through the MAF assessment panels. Greater understanding of the assessment and referral processes between housing and social services would drastically reduce overspend on accommodation budgets used for TA if the approach could be co-ordinated.

The Council will look to resource a link officer versed in the social services links, assessments and legislation to ensure seamless approach to complex cases.

- **Reinstate homeless access to primary care health**

Until the reorganisation of the primary care model into the Clinical Commissioning Group, the borough had a concordat which provided a referral route for homeless people to appropriate health services and registration with GP surgeries. This arrangement ceased following the reorganisation of primary health care in 2010.

The Council will seek to re-establish this referral pathway with the Clinical Commissioning Group.

- **Further client panels mapping and consider the establishment of single assessment/referral panel to deal with high risk, complex needs clients in one meeting**

A desk-top mapping exercise has identified nine different operational and client panels where there is likely duplication in assessing the needs of the

same high-risk clients and offenders in isolation from other sub-groups. The borough will explore whether a comprehensive single assessment panel which considers the full range of issues concerning the individual can be developed, leading to an efficient and seamless service delivery for the client.

### **3.3 Development of one-stop shop approach to housing services such as the Housing+ model**

- **Roll-out a pilot of HousingPlus approach to one-stop shop housing support and advice**

The potential role of HousingPlus in delivering rudimentary advice and lower level prevention work could be a critical development in tackling the risk of homelessness and sustaining tenancies.

The model is being developed as part of the Housing Transformation Programme to ensure frontline housing staff are in the position to advise on basic employment, public health and life skill issues to encourage residents to resolve problems early and by themselves as opposed to relying on further Council services. Where circumstances are acute HousingPlus officers would be equipped with making appropriate referrals to specialists, local networks and support.

- **Utilise the new OnSide Youth Zone and Integrated Youth Services to provide housing options advice**

The approval of a £6million state-of-the-art Youth Zone at Parsloes Park will offer more than 20 activities on offer every session for young people aged 8 to 19, or up to 25 for those with a disability. The aim of the Youth Zone is to raise the aspirations, enhance prospects and improve the health and wellbeing for young people in Barking and Dagenham, by providing affordable access to a wide range of programmes, services and activities including sports, arts, music, employability and mentoring. Integrated Youth Services already run a variety of activities through its three youth centres at The Vibe, Gascoigne and Sue Bramley, as well as 'pop-up' provision in areas of high need, such as Marks Gate. This creates an opportunity for housing advice and youth services to provide outreach support on parental ejection, rough sleeping and housing options and choice.

### **3.4 Joint commissioning of services to provide seamless housing options to all clients**

- **Joint commissioning strategy for accommodation for people with supported needs**

The Council has already identified the need for a more integrated and seamless provision of housing-related support and plans to address the gaps with a set of accommodation reviews around mental health, older persons and learning disabilities in particular. A joint commissioning approach will be unveiled in 2016.

- **Create an Older Persons Housing Pathway**

The Council is currently experiencing high demand for sheltered housing with over five hundred people on the waiting list, with minimal voids and no hard to let stock. The sheltered schemes and what they offer vary greatly and this needs to be considered in light of the borough's need to create an effective and reappraised older persons housing pathway.

The Council is to commission some analysis in 2016 on how the older people's housing pathway currently works, particularly the interface between sheltered housing, extra care housing, residential care and nursing care. This analysis will consider how individuals move between different types of accommodation and whether the current system is achieving the goal of ensuring that older people can live independently and in the community for as long as possible.

- **Maximise nomination rights on housing association properties**

The Housing Advice team is dependent upon housing associations in alerting them of properties which are due for nomination by the Council, especially when they become vacant for relet. However there is no robust protocol in place or monitoring to ensure this happens effectively.

The Council is to review all previous nomination agreements and schemes to ensure that obligations are being fulfilled and that the Council receives its correct share of properties.

- **Lobby for reform of IBAA data collection to obtain data on social care placements and more information on placements in TA**

The implementation of the IBAA has allowed Barking and Dagenham to monitor the numbers and levels of placements in the locality by other boroughs however it does not currently indicate the costs that those placements can bring to wider services. For strategic planning purposes it would be useful for the host borough:

- to know more details about the placements and their needs
- the number of social care placements made which are not currently covered by the agreement

Barking and Dagenham will lobby London Councils and sub-regional neighbours in the East London Housing Partnership to make this information an integral part of the quarterly reporting.

- **Continue to work with the Landlords & Letting Agents Forum**

Continue to develop the trust and co-operation of landlords and letting agents in the borough which has been critical for the Council's introduction of mandatory licensing and overseeing the implementation of welfare reform and energy efficiency measures in the PRS.

The Council will continue to facilitate the Landlord & Letting Agents Forum as a bilateral platform for consultation and engagement over policy and operational issues. This will be complimented by working with local letting agencies in the production of quarterly surveys which act as a temperature check on rent levels, fees, level of supply and emerging trends in the PRS market.

## **OBJECTIVE FOUR: Provide appropriate accommodation options**

<b>Outcomes:</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Creation of new affordable housing supply</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Maximised use of own assets for temporary accommodation</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Reconfigured portfolio of hostel accommodation</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Professional private sector housing solutions including the potential for a local lettings agency</b>
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Increased housing choice for supported people</b>
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Reviewed accommodation needs of gypsy and traveller communities</b>

### **4.1 Creation of new affordable housing supply**

- **Aim to create 1,236 new homes per year to increase housing supply**

With Barking and Dagenham promoted as east London's growth opportunity, the Council is committed to housing regeneration, estate renewal and new supply to meet the population and housing challenges of the next fifteen years. The Borough has an existing requirement to provide 1,236 new homes under the Mayor's London Plan but the draft Local Plan for the area discusses the potential to deliver 2,333 and will map out its supply over the next fifteen years through a new Housing Implementation Strategy.

- **Develop new affordable housing options on key development sites through the Local Plan**

The draft Local Plan examines the challenges in delivering new supply on major sites and questions the viability of providing 40% affordable homes on each as required by the Mayor's London Plan. As part of the options appraisal the draft Local Plan is consulting on the provision of either 25% or 30% of affordable homes on key sites as better target of delivery than the London Plan offers.

The draft Local Plan targets would provide between 583-700 affordable units a year with 233-280 being shared ownership, sub-market rent or low cost homes for sale and 350-420 delivering social rents.

- **Work with Haig Housing on affordable housing options for ex-forces personnel**

Barking and Dagenham has pledged to assist the armed forces and their families adapt to a return to normal life following service in the field. The Council signed an Armed Forces Community Covenant in 2012 and prioritised those who had been in service under the new Allocations Policy in 2014.

The Council is now exploring how it can assist the strategic partner of the Help for Heroes campaign, ex-services charity Haig Housing, in delivering new supply of general needs rental accommodation in east London for returning servicemen at risk of homelessness.

#### **4.2 Maximised use of own assets for temporary accommodation**

- **Centralise accommodation decision-making at one point of control**

Services with clients at risk of homelessness have suffered from a significant budget squeeze and in some cases overspends due to the lack of a centrally agreed accommodation procurement strategy which would have allowed the Council as one to identify, procure and provide appropriate housing. To be cost effective, avoid duplication and streamline the provision of temporary housing solutions the Council will explore the set-up of a single point of procurement for all temporary accommodation for housing, children's services and teams dealing with NRPF clients.

- **Maximise use of own assets for alternative temporary accommodation and continue to reduce our reliance on PRS**

The borough will continue to audit its property portfolio to utilise suitable buildings for housing and temporary accommodation purposes. This could include turning vacant and redundant commercial and non-domestic assets into dwellings, utilising decommissioned premises or using regeneration schemes as short-life temporary accommodation

- **Explore the use of modular build for temporary accommodation**

Barking and Dagenham is to explore the feasibility of modular build low-cost temporary social housing, for homeless residents or other residents in urgent need, developed as an alternative to poor quality B&B and hostel accommodation. Modular build can be delivered and assembled at a low cost and much faster than traditional



new build structures and are designed to be placed on unused council land for upto 10 years.

It could be used to plug the gap between the current housing shortage and other, permanent building schemes which are in the pipeline.

#### **4.3 Reconfigured portfolio of hostel accommodation**

- **Review the use of hostel facilities to match them to appropriate client-based accommodation with floating hostel support staff**

Housing advice services are to review the provision of hostel support following an assessment of vulnerable placements and high risk clients with complex needs to tailor accommodation appropriately to specific cohorts.

The Council is reviewing the opportunity to utilise the smallest hostel site with a view to working in partnership with various agencies to assist those customers with high and complex needs requiring supported interventions.

- **Review of Boundary Road hostel**

As part of its reconfiguration of hostel services, the borough will test the feasibility of using the Boundary Road hostel for high-risk, complex needs clients.

#### **4.4 Professional private sector housing solutions including the potential for a local lettings agency**

- **Review Article 4 direction restricting Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)**

The borough introduced an Article 4 Direction in 2011 withdrawing permitted development rights to convert family-sized accommodation into Houses in Multiple Occupation. HMOs are only permitted where:

- The number of houses that have been converted to flats or HMOs in any road does not exceed 10% of the total number of houses in the road
- No two adjacent properties apart from dwellings that are separated by a road should be converted.

However with the growth of the PRS sector, the private sector housing team have identified noticeable levels of HMOs being registered for a license which do not comply with the Article 4 criteria and are potentially prevented from letting. This problem needs to be viewed in the context of fresh demand for HMO and shared facility housing for young persons, care leavers and mental health

clients to assist in the Council's duties to provide reasonable move-on accommodation.

With this housing pressure in mind the Council will review the current effectiveness of the Article 4 Direction.

- **Use of Interim Management Orders (IMOs) to improve poor quality PRS**

As part of the mandatory licensing regime of the private rented sector, the Council will begin to issue Interim Management Orders (IMOs) to take control of the most problematic properties and HMOs and acts as temporary landlord for up to a year. The Council can remedy hazards and defects and implement a management scheme. This returns vacant dwellings back to use either as fresh housing supply or suitable managed lets which could encourage landlords to engage with the Council in future provision.

- **Encourage growth of professional private rented accommodation**

The Reside model has already used institutional investment to provide social rented stock and already the mandatory licensing regime in Barking and Dagenham is driving up accommodation standards while taking action against disreputable landlords. However there is a threat from landlords who wish to disinvest and it is important that institutional private rented investment (IPRI) is encouraged to add a dependable supply to PRS.

The London Plan suggests that 12% of all stock in Barking and Dagenham should be institutional private rent and the Draft Local Plan looks at developing these targets further

- **Develop a local lettings agency to reduce procurement costs of PRS and offer a management and repairs service to encourage landlords to provide suitable private lets**

The success of the Reside model in producing affordable accommodation to working families for 80% market rent has prompted the council to test the feasibility of establishing a local lettings agency. The aim is for it to procure PRS properties which could be managed by the Council and used to supply housing for households need or to discharge the homelessness duty.

The lettings market is highly competitive and PRS properties are becoming harder to procure. The Council is keen to explore ways to secure a steady stream of affordable accommodation to support its own housing needs. A feasibility study is to be completed by the end of 2015 evaluating the business case and providing insight into the viability of such a model in the current local market.

- **Utilise GLA Empty Homes funding to bring trickle supply on five year leases**

The borough has a commendable record in returning long-term private sector empty properties back into use, reducing the number from 750 in 2010 to 199 in 2015 – the lowest recorded number. The Empty Property Unit has used a mix of advice, incentive, encouragement and enforcement to persuade owners to return their vacant dwellings to occupation instead of being wasted assets causing neighbourhood blight.

One particular strand of the strategy has been to utilise empty homes grant from the Greater London Authority and encourage owners to repair their properties and rent the accommodation on a five year lease to the Council's temporary accommodation unit. Between 2012 and 2015, 43 dwellings were returned to use in this fashion using £523,000 of grant funding through the Mayor of London's Affordable Housing Programme. The borough is aiming to make a fresh bid for funding to bring upto ten more units back into use.

#### **4.5 Increased housing choice for supported people**

- **Develop a KeyRing scheme**

The council is exploring the KeyRing living support network model for clients who have learning disabilities. The aim of the model is to create a viable local network allowing persons with learning disabilities who live in close proximity to encourage and support each other and assist in sustaining their tenancies and independent living.

There are more than 100 networks across the UK supporting nearly 1,000 vulnerable adults and it has proven to be resourceful for clients moving onto personal budgets.

- **Explore Street Purchasing scheme for supported needs accommodation**

Street purchases can be a cost-effective way of obtaining accommodation which can be utilised for general needs or supported housing. The Council is evaluating a proposal to use a portion of the Housing Revenue Account to administer a small purchase programme of cheaper properties which could be utilised for the supported needs of single households or in some instances shared accommodation.

#### **4.6 Reviewed accommodation needs of gypsy and traveller communities**

- **Explore potential sites for future traveller pitches**

The Local Plan 2010/15 and the Housing Strategy 2012/17 committed the Council to safeguarding the existing Chase gypsy site and for permitting new sites subject to rigorous site-specific planning policy conditions. Need for traveller and gypsy pitches in the borough is exceptionally low and previous studies suggested the long-term need for between 2-9 extra pitches. As part of the Draft Local Plan the Council will monitor need and consider further provision where appropriate sites arise.

## 5.Consultation Schedule

To ensure that we have the broadest and widest consultation with service users, the public and external stakeholders the Council is inviting comment and responses to the review and preventative strategy between 16 November and 16 December 2015. The draft homelessness strategy will be accessible on our website at the following address: with a final revised document expected to be approved by the Council's Cabinet in January 2016.

### Draft Schedule of Internal Consultation

Board/Consultation Action	Date
Draft consultation with Housing Advice	27 October 2015
Housing DMT	06 November 2015
Draft consultation with internal services	09 November-13 November 2015
Draft consultation with Cllr Ashraf	13 November 2015
Public consultation	16 November-16 December 2015
Papers/draft prepared for all boards	27 November 2015
Adult Care Services DMT	03 December 2015
Community Safety Partnership	07 December 2015
Health & Wellbeing Board	08 December 2015
Children's Services DMT	10 December 2015
Corporate Strategy Group	26 January 2016
Papers prepared for Cabinet	18 February 2016
Cabinet	09 March 2016

### Draft Schedule of External Consultation

Board/Consultation Action	Date
Draft consultation with the public	16 November-16 December 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media</li> </ul>	16 November
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-newsletter</li> </ul>	27 November
Draft publication to voluntary sector groups	16 November 2015
Draft publication to registered providers	16 November 2015
Draft publication to CCG/NHS groups	16 November 2015
Strategic Volunteers Forum	14 December 2015
Voluntary sector stakeholder workshops	February 2016
Draft publication to Landlords Forum	January 2016



## 6.Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2016/23

### OBJECTIVE 1: Reducing demand through prevention

#### Outcome 1.1: Homelessness prevented through housing support, advice and initiatives for vulnerable/at risk household

	Strategic Action	Lead	Resource	Timescale	Target
1	Maintain rent deposit/advance scheme	Housing Advice	Homeless Prevention Grant and existing resources	On-going	
2	Monitor court representation scheme	Housing Advice	Existing resources and Legal Aid/Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme	On-going	
3	Voluntary sector/PSH referral route against illegal evictions/harassment	Private Sector Housing	Existing resources	On-going, starting in Year 1	
4	Agree RSL eviction protocol	Housing Advice	Existing resources	Year 1	
5	Develop an Homeless Prevention Fund	Housing Advice	Homeless Prevention Grant and existing resources	On-going, starting in Year 1	
6	Continue 'dispelling the myth' programme	Housing Advice	Existing resources	On-going	
7	Early rent alert scheme with children's services	Housing Advice	Existing resources	On-going, starting in Year 1	

8	Homeless Prevention Improvement Plan	Housing Advice	Existing resources	On-going, starting in Year 1	
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**Outcome 1.2: Encouraging self-resolution of housing crises**

	Strategic Action	Lead	Resource	Timescale	Target
1	Delivery of enhanced housing options tool	Housing Advice	Existing resources	End of Year 1	
2	Continue to promote BanD Together routemaster service	Housing Advice	Existing resources	On-going	

**Outcome 1.3: Co-ordinated multiagency interventions to assist households affected by welfare reform**

	Strategic Action	Lead	Resource	Timescale	Target
1	Prepare for universal credit, second phase of welfare reform and identify those impacted	Housing Advice/Elevate	Existing resources	On-going	

**Outcome 1.4: Increased access to employment support for families and young people**

	Strategic Action	Lead	Resource	Timescale	Target
1	Improved information on skills, learning and jobs	Employability Partnership	Existing resources	On-going	



## OBJECTIVE 2: Enabling pathways away from homelessness

### Outcome 2.1: Re-established Homelessness Forum

	Strategic Action	Lead	Resource	Timescale	Target
1	Re-established independently run Homelessness Forum	Housing Strategy and Housing Advice	Existing resources	On-going, starting in Year 1	

### Outcome 2.2: Successful partnership with voluntary sector and external providers supporting those suffering homelessness

1	Develop voluntary sector referral pathways	Housing Advice	Existing resources	End of Year 1	
2	Develop RSL partnerships for cost effective supported accommodation	Housing Strategy	Existing resources	On-going	

### Outcome 2.3: Greater tenancy sustainment across all tenures

1	Ingrain good tenancy practices for all tenants	Housing Advice		On-going	
2	Draft tenancy guides for PRS	Housing Advice	Existing resources	On-going,	

			with additional support from building society	starting in Year 1	
<b>Outcome 2.4: More effective identification of hidden homelessness, in particular rough sleepers and LGBT persons</b>					
1	Early identification of LGBT homelessness risk	Housing Advice	Existing resources	On-going, starting in Year 1	

2	Minimise rough sleeping through partnership interventions to ensure NSNO	Housing Advice	Existing resources		
<b>Outcome 2.4: Utilised external partnerships to support vulnerable single persons who are homeless</b>					
1	Support ELHP bid for single homelessness project	Housing Strategy/ELHP	Existing resources in ELHP	Year 1	
2	Debt management project for single homelessness	Adult Community Services (AC)	Existing resources - £60,000 from ACS	Completed by Year 1	

<b>OBJECTIVE 3: Create integrated services at first contact</b>					
<b>Outcome 3.1: Gold Standard accreditation for housing options service</b>					
	<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Resource</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Target</b>
1	Aim for Gold Standard accreditation for	Housing Advice	Existing resources	Start in	

	housing options			Year 1	
2	Review housing advice structure and prevention services to ensure fit for purpose	Housing Advice	Existing resources	Year 1	
3	Consider further invest-to-save bids	Housing Advice	Existing resources	Begin in Year 1	
<b>Outcome 3.2: Co-ordinated 'single pathways' protocols, processes and mapping between services</b>					
1	Review all processes/protocols between housing, health, adult/children's services	Housing Advice	Existing resources	Year 1	
2	Mandatory staff attendance at bi-annual conference on single pathways policy	Housing Advice	Existing resources	On-going, starting in Year 1	
3	Consider appointment of referral link officer for all complex need cases	Housing Advice			
4	Reinstate homeless access to primary health care	Housing Advice		Year 1	
5	Further client panels mapping and consider a single assessment panel for high risk clients	Housing Advice		Year 1	
<b>Outcome 3.3: Development of one-stop shop approach to housing services such as HousingPlus model</b>					
1	Roll-out a pilot of HousingPlus approach to one-stop shop housing support and advice	Landlord Services		Year 2	
2	Utilise the Onside Youth Zone and Integrated Youth Services	Integrated Youth Services	Existing resources and funding from Jack Petchey Foundation and the Queen's Trust		
<b>Outcome 3.4: Joint commissioning of services to provide seamless housing options to all clients</b>					

1	Joint commissioning strategy for supported people accommodation options	Housing Strategy/AC	Existing resources	Begin in Year 1	
2	Create an Older Persons Housing Pathway	Housing Strategy/AC	Existing resources	Begin in Year 1	
3	Maximise nomination rights on housing association properties	Housing Strategy	Existing resources	Complete by end of Year 1	
4	Lobby for reform of IBAA data collection to obtain data on social care placements	ELHP	Existing resources	On-going	
5	Continue to work with the landlords and letting agents forum	Private Sector Housing (PSH)	Existing resources	On-going	

## OBJECTIVE 4: Provide appropriate accommodation options

### Outcome 4.1: Creation of new affordable housing supply

	Strategic Action	Lead	Resource	Timescale	Target
1	Aim to create 1,236 new homes per year to increase housing supply	Regeneration/Housing Strategy		On-going	
2	Develop new affordable housing options on key development sites through the Local Plan	Planning Policy/Housing Strategy		On-going	
3	Work with Haig Housing on affordable housing options for ex-forces personnel	Housing Strategy	Existing resources	On-going	

<b>Outcome 4.2: Maximised use of own assets for temporary accommodation</b>					
	<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Resource</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Target</b>
<b>1</b>	Centralise accommodation decision-making at one point of control	Housing Advice		Year 1	
<b>2</b>	Maximise use of own assets for alternative TA and continue to reduce reliance on PRS	Housing Advice	Existing resources	On-going	
<b>3</b>	Explore use of modular build for TA	Housing Advice		Year 2	

<b>Outcome 4.3: Reconfigured portfolio of hostel accommodation</b>					
	<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Resource</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Target</b>
<b>1</b>	Review use of hostel facilities to match them to appropriate client-based accommodation	Housing Advice	Existing resources	Year 1	
<b>2</b>	Review of Boundary Road hostel	Housing Advice	Existing resources and GLA grant	Complete by Year 2	
<b>Outcome 4.4: Professional private sector solutions including a local lettings agency</b>					
	<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Resource</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Target</b>
<b>1</b>	Review of Article 4 Direction on HMOs	Planning	Existing resources	Year 1	

		Policy/PSH			
2	Use of IMOs to improve poor quality PRS	PSH		On-going	
3	Encourage growth of professional PRS	Planning Policy	Existing resources		
4	Develop a local lettings agency	Housing Advice			
5	Utilise GLA empty homes funding	Housing Strategy	Existing resources and GLA grant of £300,000	Begin in Year1 and completed by Year 3	

**Outcome 4.5: Increased housing choice for supported people**

	Strategic Action	Lead	Resource	Timescale	Target
1	Develop Keyring scheme	AC			
2	Explore street purchasing scheme for supply of supported needs accommodation	Housing Strategy	£2.0m from Housing Revenue Account		

**Outcome 4.6: Reviewed accommodation needs of gypsy and traveller communities**

	Strategic Action	Lead	Resource	Timescale	Target
1	Explore potential sites for future traveller	Planning Policy	Existing resources	Evaluated	

	pitches through the Local Plan		and potential external funding	by Year 5	
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