



NOTICE OF MEETING

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING

MONDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2019 AT 4.30 PM

EXECUTIVE MEETING ROOM - THE GUILDHALL FLOOR 3

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If any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting has access requirements, please notify the contact named above.

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING

Councillor Darren Sanders (Liberal Democrat)

Group Spokespersons

Councillor Cal Corkery, Labour

Councillor Scott Payter-Harris, Conservative

(NB This Agenda should be retained for future reference with the minutes of this meeting.)

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A G E N D A

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Declaration of Interests**
- 3 Homelessness strategy 2018-2023 (Pages 3 - 42)**

The purpose of the report by the Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services is to present the updated final homelessness strategy which

outlines Portsmouth's preventative approach to understanding and responding to customers and residents who face homelessness.

RECOMMENDED that the Cabinet Member for Housing endorses the Council's Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023 and associated action plan.

4 Tenancy Strategy 2019-2024 (Pages 43 - 58)

The purpose of the report by the Director of Housing Neighbourhoods and Building Services is to present the updated Portsmouth City Council Tenancy Strategy which outlines the Portsmouth City Council's approach to tenancy used by itself and registered provider partners in social and affordable rented properties.

RECOMMENDED that the Cabinet Member for Housing approves the Council's Tenancy Strategy 2019-2024.

5 Making the private rented sector easier and safer (Pages 59 - 82)

The purpose of the report by the Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services is to update members on the current issues in the Private Rental Sector and outline some of the options available to tackle this.

RECOMMENDED

- (1) The Cabinet Member for Housing notes the report on Making the Private Rented Sector easier and safer (Appendix 1).**
- (2) That officers are tasked with developing a proposed Private Rented Sector Strategy for consideration by councillors in early 2020.**
- (3) That officers undertake informal consultation with stakeholders, using this report as a basis for encouraging views and ideas on how to make the private rented sector safer and easier to access.**

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Agenda Item 3

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Agenda item:

Title of meeting: Cabinet Member for Housing Decision Making

Date of meeting: 21st October 2019

Subject: Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023

Report by: James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

1.1.To present the updated final homelessness strategy which outlines Portsmouth's preventative approach to understanding and responding to customers and residents who face homelessness.

2. Recommendations

2.1.To endorse the council's Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023 and associated action plan.

3. Background

3.1.There is a duty on all local authorities to provide an advice service to all homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 defines homelessness as a person who has no accommodation available for his occupation which they are entitled to occupy, have an expressed or implied licence to occupy, or can occupy by any enactment or rule of law. A person is also homeless if they have accommodation but cannot secure entry to it.

3.2.Homelessness impacts on all Portsmouth residents and those with a local connection to the city who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

3.3.Between April 2016 and March 2018, 2,382 homeless applications were made to the authority, with almost 50% resulting from a private rented sector tenancy ending.

3.4.A related, but separate issue is rough sleeping, and Portsmouth has seen a significant increase in the number of people sleeping on the city's streets over the last decade. In November 2017, 42 people were identified as rough sleeping during the Annual Rough Sleeping Count. This strategy should be read in conjunction with Portsmouth's Street Homelessness and Rough

Sleeping Strategy 2018 - 2020, which was agreed by councillors on 11th September 2018.

4. Legislative requirements

- 4.1. The Homelessness Act 2002 gave housing authorities the power to carry out a homelessness review for their area and formulate and publish a homelessness strategy. The council's most recent homelessness strategy ran from 2008 - 2013.
- 4.2. An exemption from this requirement was granted for 'excellent authorities', who included Portsmouth, but this was revoked by the Local Audit and Accountability Act (2014) and all housing authorities are now required to publish a homelessness strategy.
- 4.3. Following the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which introduced additional duties for the housing authority and its partner agencies, the council drafted a new strategy which supports a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to the prevention and relief of homelessness.
- 4.4. To be effective, the homelessness strategy will need to be based upon realistic assumptions and be jointly owned with partners, who share in the responsibility for its delivery.
- 4.5. The strategic vision: "Working Together to Prevent Homelessness" supports the corporate plan to help customers and residents live healthy, safe and independent lives.

5. Consultation

- 5.1. The draft Homelessness Strategy 2018-2020 was agreed by the Cabinet Member for Housing on 29th January 2019 and was then consulted upon. Consultation on this strategy took place between 30th January and 30th April 2019.
- 5.2. The council asked to hear from anyone who has an interest in the issues surrounding homelessness in the city, either in response to this draft strategy, or with other constructive information which could have been used to form the final strategy and action plan.
- 5.3. The council received eight substantive responses by email, of which three came from other functions within the council, and no responses in writing.
- 5.4. A key theme found across the consultation feedback related to the need for closer working relationships between agencies, for example between the local authority and the private sector, between statutory agencies and non-statutory agencies, and between health and learning disability services and homelessness services.
- 5.5. A further, prevalent theme of the consultation responses was an emphasis of the importance of considering the specific needs of certain groups of people,

for example those with autism, learning disabilities, physical and mental health problems, or rough sleepers. Responses highlighted the need to understand how such characteristics could affect people when homeless, and to understand what support people might need in order to effectively sustain accommodation.

5.6. These themes from the feedback has influenced the final strategy. Section 5 of the strategy details how housing assessments and housing plans for those threatened with or experiencing homelessness should be informed by the individual needs of that person, and by the views of any relevant professionals or supporting agencies. They should be holistic, taking into account any specific vulnerabilities or support needs that might relate to such characteristics as learning disabilities, health problems or substance misuse issues

5.7. The action plan underscores the need for closer working between partner agencies (for example actions number 2 and 9), and the need to tailor assistance according to the specific needs of applicants (for example actions number 14 and 15, which were both added following consultation).

6. **Strategy**

6.1. In line with the corporate vision, and in response to the problems of rough sleeping, the city council has developed a model ('Accommodation First, Not Accommodation Only') and a strategy (the Street Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Partnership Strategy 2018-2020) that informs the approach to supporting anyone facing homelessness in the city. This strategy recognises that people often need more than just a place to live to be able to live healthy, safe and independent lives.

6.2. It is vital to work together to tackle the causes and effects of homelessness. This model captures the commitment evident across the city already to provide help and support through the various agencies and community support available. The city council want to build on this to enhance, support and co-ordinate the city to work together to prevent homelessness.

6.3. To achieve this, five key aims of the strategy have been identified:-

- 6.3.1. Prevent Homelessness
- 6.3.2. Reduce rough sleeping
- 6.3.3. Relieve homelessness
- 6.3.4. Sustain tenancies
- 6.3.5. Direct the strategy

6.4. The city council is committed to working together to prevent and relieve homelessness in Portsmouth wherever possible, and the strategy has identified 15 action points as follows:

Proposed Action	Strategic Priorities	Timescale
1. Reduce the use of B&Bs and hotel as emergency temporary accommodation.	3	Already started. Complete end 2020/21
2. Develop the working relationship between partner agencies to inform and develop practical and effective Personalised Housing Plans (PHPs)	1,5	Ongoing
3. Work with advice services to make sure more residents at risk of homelessness are identified at an early stage, when support could prevent homelessness.	1,2	Ongoing
4. Work closely with welfare benefit teams to be able to work proactively in the prevention of homelessness situations arising.	1	Ongoing
5. Identify and develop collaborative working with statutory services.	4	Ongoing
6. Work with the private rental sector to explore how additional advice, support or guidance could increase availability and affordability for tenants	3,4	Autumn 2019 onwards
7. Explore innovative funding solutions to help people access private rented sector.	3	2020
8. Use our learning from the review of supported housing services to inform the contract and commissioning process of all supported housing services.	4,5	Already started. Complete by summer 2020
9. Develop working relationships between different partner and stakeholder groups, including policies and procedures, to work together to help prevent homelessness or sustain accommodation.	5	Already started, ongoing
10. Explore the potential to extend the Local Authority Housing tenancy management approach to offer similar support in the private rented sector.	1	2020
11. Clearly signpost rent deposit schemes available to those who become homeless.	1,3	Autumn 2019- Spring 2020
12. Understand the role guarantors have in helping people facing homeless to access the private rent sector.	1,3	Autumn 2019- Spring 2020
13. Increase information for landlords and tenants on good tenancy management with the aim of reducing homelessness.	1,4	Ongoing
14. Ensure members of council staff have a good understanding of the particular needs of certain client groups (e.g. people with learning disabilities, autism, mental health problems, and those experiencing domestic abuse) and deliver services accordingly.	3	Ongoing
15. Understand the specific housing related needs of those who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse, and shape services accordingly.	3,4	Ongoing

7. Reasons for recommendations

- 7.1. To ensure that the council's homelessness strategy is up to date and meets the needs of the customers and residents of Portsmouth.
- 7.2. To outline the strategic actions that the council, working in partnership with others agencies, community groups and providers, will take to tackle and minimise homelessness, and its impacts, as much as possible.
- 7.3. To ensure the council continues to meet the statutory duties under Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and supports the most vulnerable in society.

8. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 6.1 Following the feedback from the consultation, a full Equalities Impact Assessment of this strategy has been written and is attached in Appendix 2.

9. City Solicitor's comments

- 9.1. Under the Homelessness Act 2002 all local housing authorities must have in place a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their area. The strategy must set out the authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.
- 9.2. The strategy must be kept under review and regard had, when modifying it, the local housing authority must have regard to its current allocation scheme and tenancy strategy.
- 9.3. Before modifying a homelessness strategy, the authority must consult such public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate.
- 9.4. Following legislative changes, in particular the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, it is appropriate for the City Council to review, consult on and modify its strategy. Non-statutory guidance in relation to local housing authorities' homelessness duties has recently been updated to reflect these legislative changes and provide an outline of the powers, duties and obligations on housing authorities - "Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities" 2018.
- 9.5. The Cabinet Member has authority to approve the recommendations set out in this report in order to meet the authority's statutory obligations.

10. Director of Finance comments

- 10.1. There are no direct financial implications as a result of approving this Homelessness Strategy.

10.2. The costs of the consultation were met from the existing cash limited budget.

Signed by:

.....
James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Final Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023

Appendix 2 - Equalities Impact Assessment

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Housing Act 1996	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/52/contents
Homelessness Act 2002	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/7/contents
Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/contents/enacted
Portsmouth City Council's Street Homeless and Rough Sleepers Partnership Strategy 2018-2020	https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=152&MIId=4062

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/

Deferred/ Rejected by on

.....
Signed by:
Councillor Sanders
Cabinet Member for Housing



Portsmouth City Council Homelessness Strategy

2018-2023

"Working together to prevent homelessness"

Executive Summary

Welcome to Portsmouth City Council's Homelessness Strategy for 2018 - 2023.

This strategy maintains the commitment to prevent homelessness in the city and should be read in conjunction with the Street Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2020. The council plans to review and combine both strategies on expiry of the Street Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy.

With new duties placed on local authorities by the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017), the city council aims to work closely with its partners to be able to prevent homelessness whenever possible. This approach aligns with the city council's corporate priority, which outlines the desire to:

"Make Portsmouth a city that works together, enabling communities to thrive and people to live healthy, safe and independent lives"

In line with the corporate vision, and in response to the problems of rough sleeping, the city council has developed a model ('Accommodation First, Not Accommodation Only') and a strategy (the Street Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Partnership Strategy 2018-2020) that informs the approach to supporting anyone facing homelessness in the city. This strategy recognises that people often need more than just a place to live to be able to live healthy, safe and independent lives.

It is vital to work together to tackle the causes and effects of homelessness. This model captures the commitment evident across the city already to provide help and support through the various agencies and community support available. The city council want to build on this to enhance, support and co-ordinate the city to work together to prevent homelessness.

To achieve this, five key aims of the strategy have been identified:-

1. Prevent Homelessness
2. Reduce rough sleeping
3. Relieve homelessness
4. Sustain tenancies
5. Direct the strategy

The city council is committed to working together to prevent and relieve homelessness in Portsmouth wherever possible.

Consultation

Consultation on this strategy took place between 30th January and 30th April 2019.

The primary channels of communication were as follows.

- Placing a copy of the draft strategy on the city council's website.
- The decision to approve the draft strategy was made at a council meeting which was open to the public and promoted.
- Creating a monitored email address for responses.
- Promoted by the Tackling Poverty steering group which brings together a range of groups to talk about poverty issues within the city.
- Proactive emails to a range of organisations who would be considered to likely have an interest in the strategy.

The city council asked to hear from anyone who has an interest in the issues surrounding homelessness in the city, either in response to this draft strategy, or with other constructive information which could have been used to form the final strategy and action plan.

The main three questions posed to all consultees were as follows:

1. Are the five strategic aims of the strategy, set out in Part Two of this document, correct and fit for purpose? If not, why not and what should they be?
2. Are the actions in the draft action plan correct? What further actions should be considered and why?
3. What oversight and monitoring structures should be in place to ensure that this strategy is delivered? We are interested to hear from organisations who believe that they have a role to play in supporting this function.

The council received eight substantive responses by email, of which three came from other functions within the city council.

The council received no responses in writing.

A key theme found across the consultation feedback related to the need for closer working relationships between agencies, for example between the local authority and the private sector, between statutory agencies and non-statutory agencies, and between health and learning disability services and homelessness services.

A further, prevalent theme of the consultation responses was an emphasis of the importance of considering the specific needs of certain groups of people, for example those with autism, learning disabilities, physical and mental health problems, or rough sleepers. Responses highlighted the need to understand how such characteristics

could affect people when homeless, and to understand what support people might need in order to effectively sustain accommodation.

These themes from the feedback has influenced the final strategy. Section 5 of the strategy details how housing assessments and housing plans for those threatened with or experiencing homelessness should be informed by the individual needs of that person, and by the views of any relevant professionals or supporting agencies. They should be holistic, taking into account any specific vulnerabilities or support needs that might relate to such characteristics as learning disabilities, health problems or substance misuse issues.

The action plan underscores the need for closer working between partner agencies (for example actions number 2 and 9), and the need to tailor assistance according to the specific needs of applicants (for example actions number 14 and 15, which were both added following consultation).

1. Overview

- 1.1. Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 requires housing authorities to publish a homelessness strategy. This strategy develops from and builds on the previous homelessness strategy and its focus on preventing homelessness in Portsmouth. It defines a clear model of intervention and support: 'Accommodation First, not Accommodation Only' (see p.8, Fig 1). This model of approach promotes the need to fully understand the individual circumstances which cause homelessness, and to offer a tailored response to support people to resolve their housing need, and sustain accommodation. The fundamental premise of the model is to ensure that life events do not result in having nowhere to live.
- 1.2. The strategy demonstrates the city council's understanding of, and approach to, responding to the complexity of homelessness. It recognises the causes of homelessness, and the potential impact of its consequences on individuals and their families.
- 1.3. Homelessness has significantly increased across England over the last decade¹. Between 2009 and 2017 local authorities experienced a 48% increase in statutory homelessness, a 60% increase in the provision of temporary accommodation and 169% increase in people sleeping rough across its towns and cities².
- 1.4. A national, cross-party parliamentary enquiry³ into the causes of homelessness concluded that homelessness 'is not caused by any one single issue, and tackling it therefore requires a multi-faceted approach and collaborative leadership'. Causes can be roughly divided into those that are structural/societal and personal/individual.
- 1.5. Events that could lead to homelessness, such as a relationship breakdown or a tenancy coming to an end, are everyday life experiences that anyone could face. However, not everyone has the necessary resources or social support networks available to them to resolve their situation and avoid homelessness. Individuals who do not have the means to immediately respond to these events, or who have additional vulnerabilities and needs that leave them overwhelmed by the experience of facing homelessness find it much more difficult to resolve their own situation.

¹ *Homelessness*, National Audit Office, 2017

² *The Homeless Monitor: England, Crisis*, 2018

³ *Homelessness*, House of Commons CLG Committee, 2016

- 1.6. Prevention continues to be the driving force of the city council's strategy to tackle homelessness, recognising the financial impact of dealing with the consequences of homelessness⁴ and also prevention's ability to create positive outcomes for those affected by homelessness.
- 1.7. The focus on prevention has been further supported by the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which was implemented in April 2018. The Act asserts the role and responsibility of local authorities to prevent and provide early intervention for anyone facing homelessness. This includes a 'duty to refer' requirement for many statutory partner agencies (for example probation, health services, social care) to ensure that help and support can be offered to anyone facing homelessness at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.8. The success of this strategy will not be without its challenges, particularly in ensuring there is sufficient availability of suitable and affordable accommodation. Provision of and access to accommodation remains a significant strategic component to the city council's ability to achieve its aim of preventing homelessness.

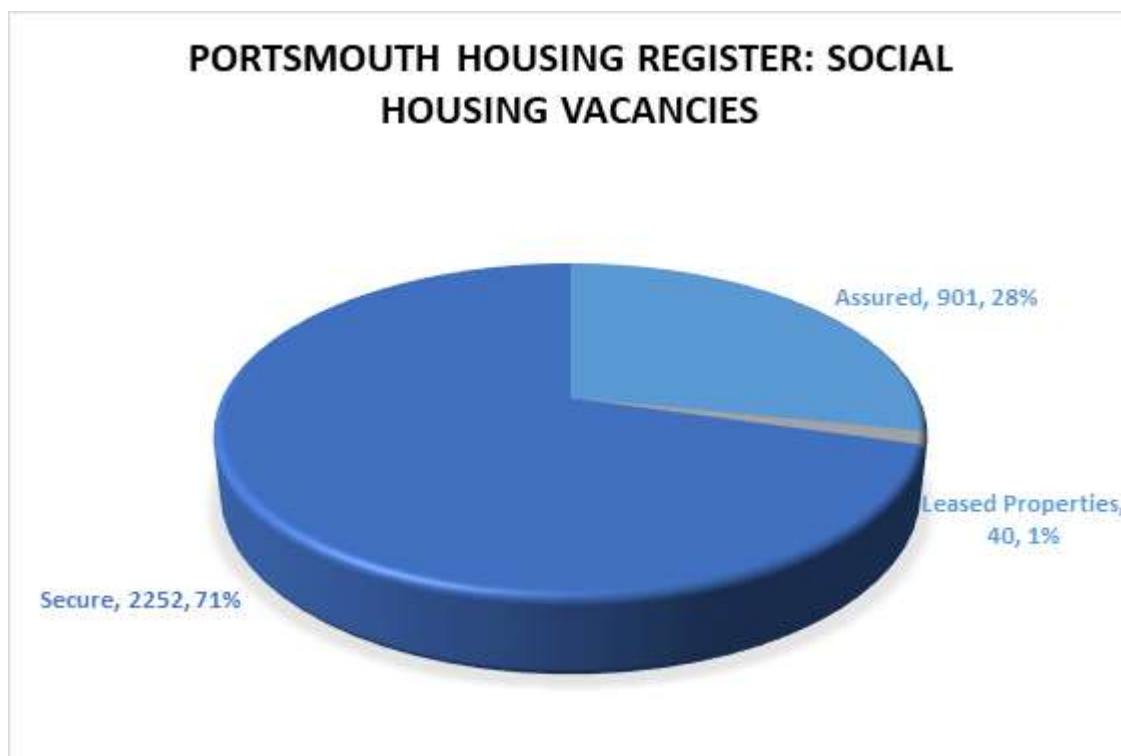
⁴ *Making every contact count*, DCLG, 2012

PART ONE

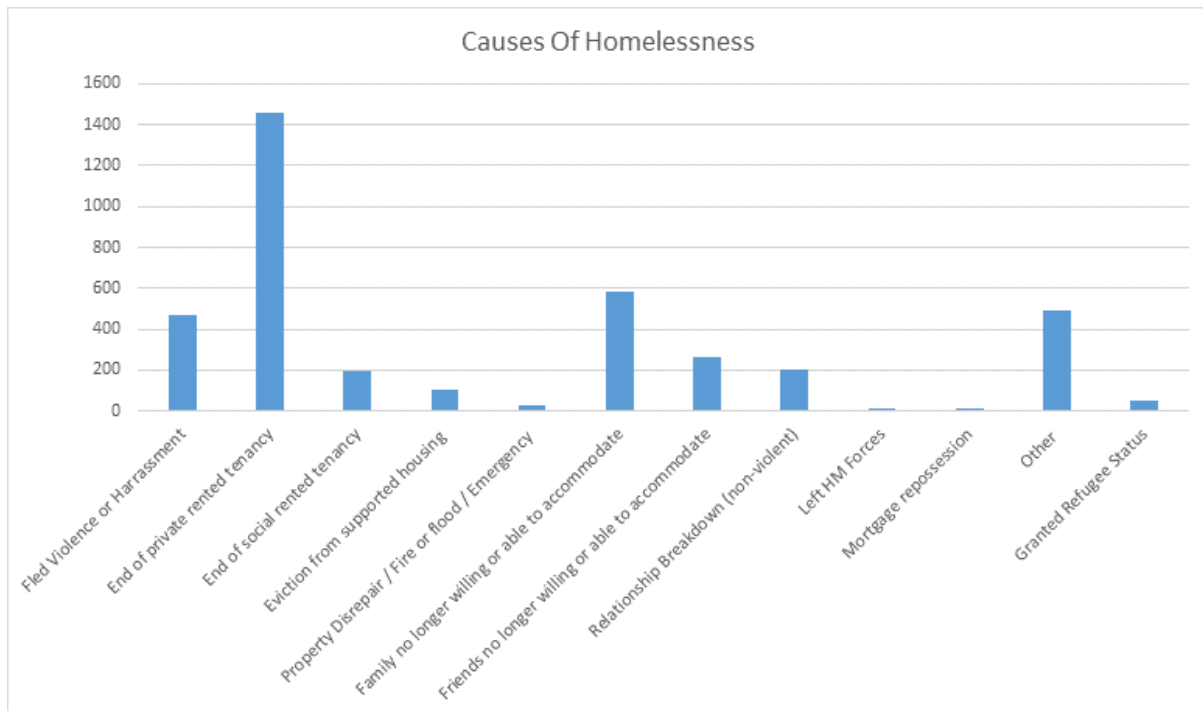
2. Portsmouth: Homelessness in context - the local picture

2.1. Between April 2016 and March 2019, the increase in the number of people approaching the city council's Housing Needs, Advice & Support team for help has highlighted the increased challenges faced by residents to meet or respond to changes in their housing circumstances.

2.2. The city council's housing register received 3193 social housing vacancies to let between April 2016 and March 2019, a decrease of 1320 properties from the previous 3 years. It has also seen a rise in the number of people applying for social housing over the last two years. In August 2016, 1677 people were waiting for an offer of a home. At the time of writing this strategy, 2374 applications are waiting, equating to a 41% increase in demand for social housing.



2.3. Between April 2016 and March 2019 Portsmouth received 3862 homeless applications from people who were homeless or threatened with homelessness. For a large number of those applications, a privately rented assured shorthold tenancy coming to an end was the cause of homelessness.



2.4. Of these applications:

- **514** households were helped to secure alternative, or their existing, accommodation, meaning that their threat of homelessness was prevented or relieved;
- **1352** households were accepted to be owed a duty to be provided with long term, settled accommodation;
- **1996** either did not qualify for assistance in the form of settled accommodation, disengaged from the process or required advice only.
- **1083** households were provided with emergency accommodation during the assessment process. **112** homeless households were provided with long term self-contained temporary accommodation while settled accommodation was found.

2.5. Further, the annual national Rough Sleeping Count identified **37** individuals sleeping on the city's streets on a single night in **2016**, increasing to **42** individuals in **2017**, and decreasing to **19** in 2018.

2.6. A Homelessness Working Group was established in Portsmouth in April 2017 with the aim of understanding the increase in the numbers of people becoming homeless. This coincided with a period where Portsmouth was experiencing a marked increase in the number of people sleeping rough on its streets. In response, the Group undertook a review of homelessness, with a particular focus on the needs of single adults.

- 2.7. The review incorporated the Safer Portsmouth Partnership's *Complex Needs* work-stream and Housing Needs, Advice & Support's *Review of Supported Housing*. The Complex Needs work and Review of Supported Housing Review informed the Group's review and identified the need to develop a Street Homeless and Rough Sleepers Partnership Strategy, which was endorsed by the city council in September 2018. This strategy seeks to develop a coordinated response across the city, recognising the need for a collaborative approach across statutory and non-statutory services in both understanding the appropriate response to help prevent rough sleeping in Portsmouth.
- 2.8. The Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government launched its national Rough Sleeping Strategy⁵ in August 2018 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy_WEB.pdf) with a commitment to halve the number of people sleeping rough by 2022 and eliminate it by 2027.
- 2.9. The city council was one of 83 local authorities to be awarded additional funding as part of the national strategy's Rough Sleeping Initiative, to support local plans to reduce rough sleeping. The funds will expand the support on offer to people who are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough, in line with the Accommodation First not Accommodation Only model approach to homelessness.
- 2.10 The Street Homeless and Rough Sleepers Partnership Strategy 2018-2020 also outlines the working model 'Accommodation First not Accommodation Only'. This model (Fig 1) has been further developed to underpin the prevention focus of this strategy, ensuring that a cohesive offer of help is available to anyone facing homelessness.
- 2.11 Additional challenges come in the form of the supply and affordability of accommodation for those on welfare benefits or on low incomes. Homelessness as a result of eviction due to rent arrears is often due to the affordability of the accommodation.

⁵ *Tough Sleeping Strategy*, MHCLG, 2018

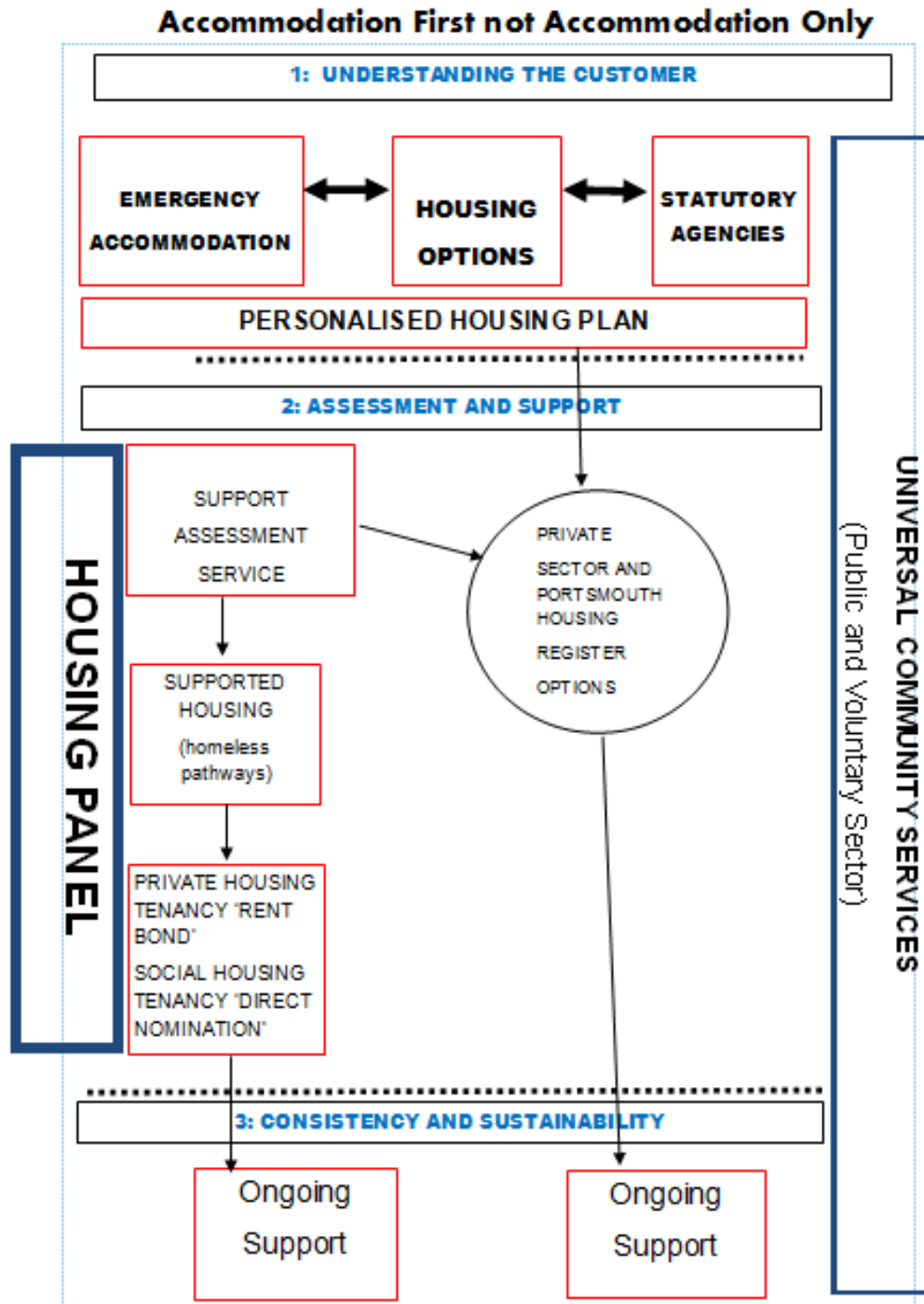


Fig 1 'Accommodation First not Accommodation Only' schematic

Portsmouth's housing market

- 3.1. Portsmouth is the most densely populated city outside of inner London, with around 207,000 residents. Of the 87,000 households in the city, around a fifth live in social rented housing and there is a higher than average proportion of terraced housing. It also has a University which caters for around 23,000 students.
- 3.2. There are approximately 700 empty properties identified in Portsmouth. Of this total approximately 130 properties are identified as those where the city council has any legislative powers to take action and bring them back into the housing market (whether for purchase or rent). Legislation restricts the number of empty property situations where the local authority can take enforcement action. The city council published its Empty Properties Strategy in 2019. This strategy looks to explore ways to enhance the authority's advice and support offer to owners of empty homes to encourage them to take steps to make the property available for occupation. This can be by sale to get it back into use via home ownership, via the private rental market or through leasing the property to the council.
- 3.3. Working in collaboration with its partners, the city council takes a 'Portsmouth First' approach to property investments, as outlined in its corporate priorities. Attention is also given to making sure there are more good quality homes that local people can afford, including council homes.
- 3.4. The city council also seeks to utilise all opportunities to develop further accommodation to increase the availability of housing to meet the needs of the city.
- 3.5 Rents in the private sector have increased and most landlords require a rent deposit, rent in advance and a guarantor. These factors are barriers for many households on welfare benefits or low incomes trying to access the private rent market.

4 **Household income and poverty**

4.1. The city includes some of the most deprived areas in England. Research⁶ has found that: "*Poverty, particularly in childhood, is by far the most powerful predictor of homelessness in early adulthood. Health and support needs, such as serious drug use, also contribute to the risks, but their statistical explanatory power is less than that of poverty*".

Postal area	Number claiming HB	Of which, how many...		
		are in employment	have a rental liability greater than their HB entitlement	have been awarded DHP to help meet their rental liability
PO1	4195	868	1726	118
PO2	3407	982	1924	128
PO3	985	331	562	32
PO4	2216	648	1377	70
PO5	3088	621	1331	85
PO6	2609	661	1307	87
PO7	268	19	85	3
PO8	428	63	114	5
PO9	2216	340	856	69
TOTAL	19412	4533	9282	597

4.2. The private rented sector now comprises more properties than social housing provision in the city. Affordability of housing has therefore become a significant feature of the options available to people and of the causes of homelessness in Portsmouth, with rents increasing while incomes are at risk from welfare reform. The city council's Tackling Poverty Strategy recognises the significance of financial deprivation for many households across the city. The impact of welfare reforms for Portsmouth residents has significant consequences for low income households in terms of their ability to meet essential costs relating to housing, energy and food⁷. This reinforces that a key consideration for this strategy is the availability of affordable, private rented sector accommodation, and the need to work with landlords to address the shortfall between Local Housing Allowance entitlement and rental charge.

4.3. Four of the priorities of Portsmouth's Tackling Poverty Strategy (2015 -2020) that closely align with the focus of this strategy are:

- Priority One - Improving our children's futures
- Priority Three - Helping residents to be financially resilient.
- Priority Four - Helping people move out of immediate crisis, but also helping them to solve their problems longer term.

⁶ *Homelessness in the UK: Who is at most risk?*, Bramley and Fitzpatrick, 2017

⁷ *The Impact of Welfare Reform in Hampshire*, Bill Sargent Trust, 2013

- Priority Five - Improving residents' lives by recognising the links between poverty and health inequalities.

4.4. Housing plays a significant part in the health and wellbeing of our residents. It remains vital that the strategy to prevent homelessness is aligned with the Health and Wellbeing strategy for the city to help residents resolve health challenges, ensuring the provision of good quality accommodation that promotes and supports wellbeing.

4.5. Portsmouth's Health and Wellbeing Strategy highlights the feature of homelessness alongside a multitude of circumstances for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Learning from the Complex Needs work concludes that severe and multiple deprivation (SMD) means homelessness co-exists alongside adverse childhood experiences, substance use and mental health needs for a number of people, which makes resolving their housing needs more challenging.

5 Portsmouth: Homelessness advice and support

5.1. Portsmouth's Housing Needs, Advice & Support service is the central point for anyone seeking help and advice in respect of a housing issue or need. The local authority's statutory responsibility to assess the needs of residents who are experiencing homelessness has been further extended, following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This offers the opportunity to look at options to prevent and relieve homeless situations at the earliest opportunity, whilst retaining the long standing statutory duty to reach a decision about any other statutory duties the local authority may owe a homeless applicant where prevention or relief options are not achievable.

5.2. The Homelessness Reduction Act has extended the local authority's responsibilities to prevent people becoming homeless. The Act amended Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 to include duties for the prevention and relief of homelessness which emphasises the duty to 'help to secure' accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. This does not mean that the local authority has a duty to directly find and secure accommodation, but rather involves the local authority working with people to agree reasonable steps to be taken by the council and applicant respectively in order to find and secure suitable accommodation.

5.3. Key to the success of this preventative focus is early identification and early help. The Homelessness Reduction Act outlines a 'duty to refer' requirement for some public bodies, including many partner agencies including hospitals, prisons, social care and the Job Centre. The city council is a signatory to a Hampshire-wide duty to refer protocol, recognising the cross boundary use of many of these services and institutions to ensure we are working closely with our partner agencies and neighbouring local authorities to identify and respond to anyone threatened with homelessness at the earliest opportunity.

5.4. The city's Private Registered Providers (PRPs) of social housing are embracing a 'commitment to refer', to mirror the duty to refer requirement of specified public authorities. They have responded to this by developing prevention teams to work closely with the local authority as they seek to support their tenants to avoid eviction action becoming necessary.

5.5. Housing Needs, Advice & Support has made additional funding available to enable officers to work flexibly and creatively with individual circumstances in developing Personalised Housing Plans (PHPs) to prevent homelessness. The PHPs contain agreed steps for the council to take and steps for the person threatened with homelessness to take in order to try and prevent homelessness. Officers are encouraged to consider innovative solutions to prevent incidences of homelessness.

- 5.6. The steps agreed in PHPs should follow a full and comprehensive assessment of what type of accommodation a person needs, and what support they would benefit from in order to sustain accommodation. Assessments will vary from case to case but they should be informed by the specific circumstances of the person threatened with homelessness, and any relevant professionals or supporting agencies who can provide relevant advice.
- 5.7. Assessments (and the resulting PHPs) should be holistic and take full account of any vulnerabilities the person has. The assessments should be tailored to account for any support needs, for example and needs arising from physical or mental health problems, learning disabilities, or substance misuse issues.
- 5.8. To enhance its early help offer, particularly to families and young people, Housing Needs, Advice & Support works collaboratively with the city council's Children's Social Care service to identify, at the earliest opportunity, families and 16/17 year olds who need some additional help beyond accommodation needs. Arrangements are in place to refer households with children to *Early Help* services where preventing homelessness is possible with specific identified support.
- 5.9. The Portsmouth Staying Close Project has been set up by Children's Social Care, with funding support from the Department for Education. The project has been developed from research which shows that young people who have been in care experience far poorer life outcomes than their peers. The purpose of the project is to enhance the development of life skills for young people, better preparing them as they progress on to living independently of support and sustaining accommodation.
- 5.10 The city council is also exploring opportunities to prevent homelessness as a result of inpatient admission or any resulting change in health circumstances affecting suitability of housing.
- 5.11 The Homelessness Reduction Act's duty to refer and PRPs' commitment to refer will further enhance Housing Needs, Advice & Support's ability to respond proactively to situations.
- 5.12 The city council commissions a service (currently with Advice Portsmouth) for its residents to obtain advice and support on a wide range of services, including advice on tenancy management and handling financial difficulties. This offers the opportunity to prevent these difficulties escalating and impacting on housing circumstances. Alongside this commissioned service, there are a number of voluntary agencies, for example Citizens Advice Portsmouth, who
- work proactively in offering advice, guidance and support to people facing difficult circumstances that could result in homelessness.

- Prison release. Portsmouth City Council has developed and maintains a good working relationship with probation and Community Rehabilitation Company services, particularly in working together to support individuals who have served long custodial sentences or are considered high risk offenders. However, there are challenges where prison release planning relates more to lower risk individuals and those on shorter sentences.
- Care leavers. To prevent young people leaving the local authority's care and finding themselves with nowhere to live, the Staying Close Project will provide accommodation to support young people through the transitional period as they leaving care plan progresses.
- Veteran Outreach Support. There is a Veterans Outreach Support provision based in Portsmouth, offering a monthly drop in for people to access advice on a variety of issues, including health, finances and employment. Working closely with this service provides the opportunity for the local authority to identify people who require support to prevent homeless situations from arising or explore options to relieve homelessness.

5.13 Portsmouth has a well-established supported housing provision which consists of three pathways:

- families;
- young people;
- adults.

5.14 A recent review of the adult pathway highlighted the need to develop a different approach to understanding individual circumstances and providing support to promote the long term sustainability of accommodation and break the cycle of repeat homelessness.

5.15 Voluntary sector services in the city have established *Circles of Support*. (<https://theyoutrust.org.uk/service/advice-services/help-through-crisis/>). This offer of support is provided through outreach or via six main foodbanks in the city, and is available to anyone in crisis and facing hardship in relation to circumstances including debt and homelessness.

5.16 Additional services for single people at risk of, or who are, sleeping rough are available through our Homeless Day Service, which is commissioned by the city council as an extension of the Housing Needs, Advice & Support service, with a specific focus on providing advice and support to people with additional and/or complex needs associated with rough sleeping. This service includes outreach

work for individuals who find accessing services difficult. The day service is currently supported with the provision of a Homeless Night Service, which offers upto 49 overnight bed spaces.

5.17 Portsmouth City Council is a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant. The covenant is a promise to people who serve or have serviced in the British military that they will not be disadvantaged by their service. In 2016, the Solent Armed Forces Partnership Board (SAFPB) was formed to oversee local delivery. In respect of the issue of homelessness, whilst there has been a reduction in the number of street homeless ex-service personnel, the SAFPB highlights that some veterans struggle to secure suitable, affordable housing after service.

5.18 The existing MOD housing offer is scheduled to transform to the Future Accommodation Model (FAM), a model that will offer a broader range of housing opportunities to align the provision with that of the general population in terms of finding accommodation and meeting housing related costs. It is not yet clear how this change in approach could impact on local housing demand or support to prevent homelessness.

5.19 Portsmouth City Council's housing waiting list is the route to being allocated social housing in the city. The eligibility and qualification criteria are set out in the Portsmouth Housing Allocation Scheme. Portsmouth experiences demand that is greater than the supply of social housing, meaning waiting times are often a barrier to this being a realistic option to relieve homelessness.

5.20 Portsmouth City Council works alongside the private rented sector to explore housing opportunities to prevent and relieve homelessness. To develop opportunities to enhance this relationship, Portsmouth has developed 'Rent it Right', a website for landlords and tenants providing information and advice, and the facility for accredited landlords to advertise their properties. The city council is in the process of developing a variety of offers for private sector landlords to help remove some of the current barriers for homeless households trying to access the private sector. This may include a letting agency service, a full property management service, or a rental top-up arrangement for some households on benefits. Rent it Right will be the platform for working in partnership with private sector landlords and for advertising landlord offers.

5.21 As outlined already in the Accommodation First not Accommodation Only model approach, support to sustain accommodation forms a key element to this approach to prevent homelessness from re-occurring, which historically has been a regular pattern of their housing cycle. Portsmouth City Council has well established supported housing pathways in the city for young people, adults and families. The supported housing review of the contract and commissioning

of existing supported housing provision for adults has led to a different approach to the offer of support within this context.

5.22 Using the Rough Sleeping Initiative funding, 'floating support' provision has been enhanced, to reflect the Accommodation First not Accommodation Only ethos for adults who secure accommodation in the private rented sector and need additional support to sustain the tenancy.

5.23 Portsmouth City Council's housing management teams have undergone a process of change over the last decade, evolving the approach to social housing tenancy management to understand what tenants need to help them sustain their tenancy.

6 Current context of homelessness in Portsmouth: A summary

- 6.1 .The number of people sleeping rough in the city, along with the increased need to provide emergency accommodation such as B&Bs for people, and the limited availability of permanent housing are all significant issues for the city. They all highlight the need to enhance our work to prevent incidences of homelessness in the first place, as well as the need to make more homes available.
- 6.2. A settled, secure home is the basis from which other support can be achieved and maintained. Alignment with the Tackling Poverty and Health and Wellbeing strategies facilitates the opportunity for residents to have a stable housing situation from which to improve their wellbeing and financial resilience.
- 6.3. It is from gaining a full understanding of the context of homelessness in Portsmouth that the strategic aims and priorities identified in Part Two of this document have been formed.

PART TWO

Strategic Aims:

1. **Prevent** Homelessness
2. **Reduce** Rough Sleeping
3. **Relieve** Homelessness
4. **Sustain** Tenancies
5. **Direct** the strategy

Priority One - Prevent homelessness

Developing meaningful personalised housing plans with people, working flexibly and creatively with individual circumstances.

Working collaboratively with our partners in being able to identify and be responsive to housing need at the earliest opportunity.

Exploring initiatives that can provide responsive joined up arrangements where people are leaving environments such as the armed forces, hospital, prison or care.

Priority Two - Reduce Rough Sleeping

Working together as a city to take an 'Accommodation First Not Accommodation Only' approach to support and safeguard anyone sleeping or at risk of sleeping on the streets of Portsmouth.

Priority Three - Relieve homelessness

Developing meaningful personalised housing plans with people that work flexibly and creatively with individual circumstances to relieve homelessness.

Ensuring that social housing accommodation is utilised as effectively and equitably as possible.

Building on 'Rent It Right' and its collaborative approach between the Local Authority and Private Landlords to develop opportunities to provide good quality, affordable accommodation across the city.

Aligning the Local Plan with this strategy to maximise the contribution to reducing homelessness of all new housing and redevelopment.

Priority Four - Sustain tenancies

Putting our learning into practice to inform how we commission and contract support provision to help people sustain accommodation.

Developing collaborative and multi-agency working relationships that help people build resilience.

Extending the reach of the approach of social housing tenancy management to the private rented sector; understanding what help tenants need to sustain their tenancy.

Priority Five - Direct the strategy

Coordinating a collaborative group to provide direction and oversight for the strategy, to agree the action plan and support those with the political, strategic and operational responsibility for delivery.

Responding to changing needs and issues by reviewing the priorities of the strategy as required.

PART THREE

An action plan will be agreed and developed by the Health and Wellbeing Board to progress the priorities.

This document only proposes a number of actions that currently are, or could in the future, support the delivery of a successful strategy. The Health and Wellbeing Board should identify timescales, decide what success would look like, and how partner organisations could work closely together in order to support its delivery.

Proposed Action	Strategic Priorities	Timescale
1. Reduce the use of B&Bs and hotel as emergency temporary accommodation.	3	Already started. Complete end spring 2021
2. Develop the working relationship between partner agencies to inform and develop practical and effective Personalised Housing Plans (PHPs)	1,5	Ongoing
3. Work with advice services to make sure more residents at risk of homelessness are identified at an early stage, when support could prevent homelessness.	1,2	Ongoing
4. Work closely with welfare benefit teams to be able to work proactively in the prevention of homelessness situations arising.	1	Ongoing
5. Identify and develop collaborative working with statutory services.	4	Ongoing
6. Work with the private rental sector to explore how additional advice, support or guidance could increase availability and affordability for tenants	3,4	Autumn 2019 onwards
7. Explore innovative funding solutions to help people access private rented sector.	3	2020
8. Use our learning from the review of supported housing services to inform the contract and commissioning process of all supported housing services.	4,5	Already started. Complete by summer 2020
9. Develop working relationships between different partner and stakeholder groups, including policies and procedures, to work together to help prevent homelessness or sustain accommodation.	5	Already started, ongoing

10. Explore the potential to extend the Local Authority Housing tenancy management approach to offer similar support in the private rented sector.	1	2020
11. Clearly signpost rent deposit schemes available to those who become homeless.	1,3	Autumn 2019-Spring 2020
12. Understand the role guarantors have in helping people facing homeless to access the private rent sector.	1,3	Autumn 2019-Spring 2020
13. Increase information for landlords and tenants on good tenancy management with the aim of reducing homelessness.	1,4	Ongoing
14. Ensure members of council staff have a good understanding of the particular needs of certain client groups (e.g. people with learning disabilities, autism, mental health problems, and those experiencing domestic abuse) and deliver services accordingly.	3	Ongoing
15. Understand the specific housing related needs of those who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse, and shape services accordingly.	3,4	Ongoing

Produced by:

Housing Needs, Advice & Support

Portsmouth City Council

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Portsmouth

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www.portsmouth.gov.uk

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Equality Impact Assessment

Full assessment form 2018

www.portsmouthccg.nhs.uk

www.portsmouth.gov.uk

Directorate:

Housing, neighbourhood & building services

Service, function:

Housing Options

Title of policy, service, function, project or strategy (new or old):

Portsmouth Homelessness Strategy 2018 - 2023: Working together to prevent homelessness

Type of policy, service, function, project or strategy:

☐

Existing

☒

New / proposed

☐

Changed

Lead officer

Shane Galvin (Housing Policy and Quality Manager)

People involved with completing the EIA:

Teresa O'Toole (Operational Support Manager)
Shane Galvin (Housing Policy and Quality Manager)
Sharon George (Interim Head of Housing Need, Advice and Support)

Introductory information (Optional)

This strategy has been developed in line with the statutory requirement as outlined in the Housing Act 1996. It is a statutory requirement for all Local Authorities to have in place a strategy to address the homelessness needs faced by its residents, and ensure it's Housing Service is meeting its statutory function in making accessible housing advice and help for anyone (eligible for public assistance) in need of this support.

Step 1 - Make sure you have clear aims and objectives

What is the aim of your policy, service, function, project or strategy?

This EIA relates to the development of a Homelessness Strategy for the city of Portsmouth. In developing this strategy, due regard has been given to the aims of the Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 s140 and specifically the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity between people who possess particular protected characteristics and those who do not. The homelessness strategy incorporates the 'Accommodation First not Accommodation Only model introduced by the Street Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Partnership Strategy 2018-2020. This model seeks to understand the circumstances of each individual/household and offer support, jointly developing a personalised housing plan, tailored to individual need. The guiding principle of Portsmouth's homelessness strategy is ensuring help and support is offered at the earliest opportunity to avoid people losing their home or becoming homeless. The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 reinforces Portsmouth's continued strategic focus on the prevention of homelessness.

Who is the policy, service, function, project or strategy going to benefit or have a detrimental effect on and how?

Homelessness is defined as "having no accommodation available for his occupation" (Housing Act 1996, Part 7)

Portsmouth has seen an increase in demand for its homelessness and housing advice services, with a 41% increase in demand for social housing seen over the last 3 years and 3862 homeless applications made. Portsmouth City Council continues with a strategic focus on the prevention of homelessness, by supporting local people to resolve issues that could result in the loss of their home.

The strategy comprises of five strategic aims:

1. Prevent Homelessness
2. Reduce Rough Sleeping - connected to the Street Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Partnership Strategy 2018 - 2020
3. Relieve Homelessness
4. Sustain Tenancies
5. Direct the strategy

This strategy will benefit anyone (eligible for public assistance) with a 'local connection' (as defined by the Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996) to the city who faces homelessness, or who find themselves in a homeless situation. Its aim is to prevent homelessness wherever possible, or to support people to find a suitable home to relieve homelessness. The extension of the legislative duties in 2017 supports the Local Authority's desire to focus its strategic plan on the prevention and relief of homelessness.

This strategy aligns with Portsmouth's inaugural Street Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Strategy 2018 - 2020, ensuring that services available to support people at risk of or who become homeless offer help and support in a way that understands individual circumstances to meet individual needs.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 requires all housing authorities to extend its legislative duties in its offer of housing advice and support to anyone threatened with or who find themselves in a homeless situation, and who are eligible to access public services, ensuring that they do so at the earliest opportunity. This extension places a 'Duty to Refer' requirement on other public bodies, such as health and social care, to ensure that early identification of possible and existing homeless situations are made and opportunities to help and support people are acted upon. This is achieved by taking an individual approach and developing a Personalised Housing Plan with customers.

This strategy will enable the Local Authority to better meet the needs of the people of Portsmouth, enabling a more flexible offer of help, tailored to meet individual need, for anyone (eligible for public assistance) facing homelessness or who is in a homeless situation.

This strategy will further promote collaborative working with statutory and non-statutory partners to tackle the often complex issues that people facing homelessness experience, as it is often not just about finding somewhere to live.

It is anticipated that this strategy will expand opportunities to prevent and relieve homelessness, reducing the number of people becoming homelessness and facing the additional consequences resulting from this experience.

What outcomes do you want to achieve?

Identify households who may be at risk of losing their accommodation at the earliest opportunity
Increase the number of people who access help as early as possible to avoid losing their home
Reduce the number of people who require emergency accommodation provision
Reduce the number of people who experience repeat homelessness

What barriers are there to achieving these outcomes?

Engagement with households at the earliest opportunity to offer support to be able to prevent homelessness
Limited options to that cater to individual circumstances in preventing homelessness
Limited affordable accommodation to meet demand/need

Step 2 - Collecting your information

What existing information / data do you have? (Local or national data) look at population profiles, JSNA data, surveys and patient and customer public engagement activity locally that will inform your project, national studies and public engagement.

JSNA
Housing Needs, Advice and support database
Housing Benefit
H-Clic (National database of homelessness demand)

Using your existing data, what does it tell you?

Increasing numbers of people making homeless applications, with over 50% the result of receiving notice to end their private rented sector tenancy

Limited numbers of homelessness prevention

An increase in the number of households where the provision of emergency accommodation is necessary

For single people - increased and consistent use of the emergency 'Night Bed' provision and Day Services. Annual Street Count identified 19 people sleeping rough.

Step 3 - Now you need to consult!

Who have you consulted with?

Statutory partners
Other public sector bodies
PRPs
Voluntary Sector Services
Local Residents

If you haven't consulted yet please list who you are going to consult with

Please give examples of how you have or are going to consult with specific groups or communities e.g. meetings, surveys

'Email mailshot' to all relevant stakeholders, both statutory and voluntary sectors.
Included as an agenda items at multi agency stakeholder meeting forums (eg Tackling Poverty Forum; Health and Wellbeing Board)
Made the draft strategy document available via PCC's website for comments/feedback from the local community

Step 4 - What's the impact?

Is there an impact on some groups in the community? (think about race, gender, disability, age, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sexual orientation, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnerships and other socially excluded communities or groups)

Generic information that covers all equality strands (Optional)

Anybody can become homeless and experience 'hidden homelessness' (ie sofa surfing) or rough sleeping. The Homelessness Act (2002) introduced the power for Local Authorities to prevent homelessness for those households that do not meet the eligibility criteria for 'priority need' status and where the homelessness is unintentional.

Part 7 on the 1996 Housing Act sets out the powers and duties of housing authorities to provide advice and assistance to anyone (eligible for public assistance) making an application to obtain accommodation resulting from homelessness or a threat of homelessness. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a set of duties on Housing Authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness and to take reasonable steps to prevent and relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants, not just those who meet the priority need criteria under the Act.

Ethnicity or race

Portsmouth is an ethnically diverse city with black, asian and minority ethnic (BAME) residents comprising 16% of the total population according to the 2011 Census

Housing Needs, Advice and Support does not collect data on ethnicity or race, and this was not a theme that came out of the consultation activity undertaken

Gender reassignment

No data is held about gender identity

Age

Eligibility to make a homeless application to a Local Housing Authority starts from 16 years old. Anyone aged 16 to 18 would be considered a 'child in need' in the first instance and their homelessness circumstances is assessed in collaboration with Children's Social Care to ensure age appropriate support is provided

Disability

In Portsmouth approximately 20% of the population has a disability that affects their day to day activities.

Under the Equality Act s.149 the Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to advance the quality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This includes meeting the needs of people with disabilities and it may need to involve treating people with disabilities more favorably than people who do not have a disability.

People facing a homelessness situation are likely to face multiple disadvantages, including mental and physical health issues, learning disability, drug and alcohol misuse, experiences of violence and abuse

Religion or belief

This data is not currently collected

Sexual orientation

It is estimated that between 5 & 7% of the population identify as lesbian, gay or bi-sexual. However there is no hard data to support this as a national census has not captured this information.

This data is not currently collected locally

Sex

According to the mid-2011 population estimates by the ONS, the gender split is roughly 50:50

Marriage or civil partnerships

Bedsit and studio flats are more affordable for couples accessing Local Housing Allowance/the housing element of Universal Credit however it is often challenging to secure advance rents, deposits and/or guarantor.

Local data highlights that relationship breakdown is a significant feature that results in people facing homelessness or becoming homeless

Pregnancy & maternity

Women who are pregnant would be assessed to determine any housing duties owed by the Local Housing Authority. All other relevant statutory services would be consulted, as appropriate

Other socially excluded groups or communities

The extension of the powers and duties owed by Local Authorities resulting from the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 ensures that socially excluded groups, for example people sleeping rough, are offered support at the earliest opportunity irrespective of the priority need criteria assessment. The strategy also identifies the need to understand the specific housing related needs faced by people experiencing domestic abuse and ensure that services are shaped to be able to appropriately respond.

Note:Other sociallyexcluded groups, examples includes,Homeless, rough sleeper and unpaid carers. Many forms of exclusion are linked to financial disadvantage. How will this change affect people on low incomes, in financial crisis or living in areas of greater deprivation?

Health Impact

Have you referred to the Joint Needs Assessment (www.jsna.portsmouth.gov.uk) to identify any associated health and well-being needs? Page 38

☒ Yes ☐ No

What are the health impacts, positive and / or negative? For example, is there a positive impact on enabling healthier lifestyles or promoting positive mental health? Could it prevent spread of infection or disease? Will it reduce any inequalities in health and well-being experienced by some localities, groups, ages etc? On the other hand, could it restrict opportunities for health and well-being?

This strategy proposes that an individual assessment is undertaken. The purpose of the assessment will be to understand all of the circumstances of the individual/household and jointly develop a personalised housing plan, which will include where relevant engaging support to address any mental or physical health needs in addition to any other support needs the assessment identifies.

Health inequalities are strongly associated with deprivation and income inequalities in the city. Have you referred to Portsmouth's Tackling Poverty Needs Assessment and strategy (available on the JSNA website above), which identifies those groups or geographical areas that are vulnerable to poverty? Does this have a disproportionately negative impact, on any of these groups and if so how? Are there any positive impacts?, if so what are they?

For more help on this element of tackling poverty and needs assessment contact Mark Sage: email:mark.sage@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

The data from the last JSNA 2016 shows a reduction in the numbers of households in areas of deprivation who are not in employment, but there has been a vast increase in the number of people sleeping rough in the city. Eligible homeless not in priority need has risen since 2015. Twenty-two per cent of all dependent children under the age of 20 years are living in poverty, which is above the England average with levels at twice the national average in some areas of the city (Charles Dickens ward). Males in Portsmouth's most deprived areas die 9.5 years earlier than males in Portsmouth's least deprived areas; for females the gap in life expectancy is 6.0 years. In 2009-13, thirty-one per cent of all low birth weight babies were born to mothers from the most deprived twenty per cent of areas.

NHS Digital data for England shows that the number of homeless people admitted to hospitals has more than trebled in six years, increasing from 2,950 in 2012 to 10,295 two years ago. The number of patients dying in hospital after being admitted from the streets is up by three hundred and sixty-five per cent, from 26 deaths in 2011/12 to 95 in 2017/18.

Step 5 - What are the differences?

Are any groups affected in a different way to others as a result of your policy, service, function, project or strategy?

Please summarise any potential impacts this will have on specific protected characteristics

N/A

Does your policy, service, function, project or strategy either directly or indirectly discriminate?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If you are either directly or indirectly discriminating, how are you going to change this or mitigate the negative impact?

N/A

Step 6 - Make a recommendation based on steps 2 - 5

If you are in a position to make a recommendation to change or introduce the policy, service, project or strategy clearly show how it was decided on and how any engagement shapes your recommendations.

The Portsmouth Homelessness Strategy 2018 - 2023 has been consulted on.

What changes or benefits have been highlighted as a result of your consultation?

Strengthened the strategy's approach to supporting people who have a learning disability, or physical or emotional health needs.
Improved recognition of the housing related needs of those who's homelessness results from experiences of domestic abuse.
Identified the Health & Wellbeing Board as the body who will be accountable for this strategy and who will develop and monitor its action plan.

If you are not in a position to go ahead what actions are you going to take?
(Please complete the fields below)

Action	Timescale	Responsible officer

How are you going to review the policy, service, project or strategy, how often and who will be responsible?

Portsmouth Health & Wellbeing Board

Step 7 - Now just publish your results

This EIA has been approved by: Paul Fielding - Assistant Director of Housing

Contact number: 02392834625

Date: 18/09/2019

PCC staff-Please email a copy of your completed EIA to the Equality and diversity team. We will contact you with any comments or queries about your preliminary EIA.
Telephone: 023 9283 4789, Email: equalities@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

CCG staff-Please email a copy of your completed EIA to the Equality lead who will contact you with any comments or queries about your full EIA. Email: sehccg.equalityanddiversity@nhs.net

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Agenda Item 4



Title of meeting:	Cabinet Member for Housing Decision Making
Date of meeting:	21 st October 2019
Subject:	Portsmouth City Council Tenancy Strategy 2019-2024
Report by:	James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Building Services
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. To present the updated Portsmouth City Council Tenancy Strategy which outlines the council's approach to tenancy used by itself and registered provider partners in social and affordable rented properties.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Cabinet Member for Housing approves the Portsmouth City Council Tenancy Strategy 2019-2024.

3. Background

- 3.1. Registered Providers (RPs) are organisations that act as a landlord to provide social or affordable housing and are also known as housing associations. There are a number of RPs, who provide social/affordable housing in Portsmouth. The council itself is also a RP because it has a retained council housing stock.
- 3.2. Most RPs offer the council nomination rights to their new and empty properties via Letting Agreements.
- 3.3. These properties are allocated via the council's central Housing Register, in line with its Housing Allocations Policy.
- 3.4. The RP lets the property to the person nominated for the tenancy, on a tenancy agreement in line with its own Tenancy Policy.
- 3.5. The Portsmouth City Council Tenancy Strategy should be taken into consideration by all RP's when creating tenancies.

- 3.6. The 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review introduced 'affordable rent' as a new form of social housing and the main type of new housing supply for the future. The new regime enabled RPs to let a property at an 'affordable rent' (inclusive of service charges, where applicable) of up to 80% of the gross open market rent (OMR) in the area for a comparable property taking account its size, location and the services being provided. Homes let under the existing regime of social/target rents are typically let at between 50-60% of open market rental value (OMR).
- 3.7. In addition, where an RP had an approved development programme, an affordable rent could be set on a proportion of its existing relets; the additional revenue raised was used to help fund, in part, the development of new affordable homes. (This excludes the city council who are unable to convert existing properties from a social rent to affordable rent when void).

4. Legislative requirements

- 4.1. The Localism Act 2011 (Section 150) places a duty on every local housing authority to publish a Tenancy Strategy.
- 4.2. Although there is no legislative requirement on the time period that the strategy needs to cover, it is recommended that this strategy is in place for five years, but will be reviewed on an annual basis or if major changes occur.
- 4.3. The council currently has a Tenancy Strategy and this is a minor update to ensure it is up to date.

5. Proposed updated strategy

- 5.1. The Portsmouth City Council Tenancy Strategy 2019-2024 is attached as Appendix 1 of this report.
- 5.2. It sets out how the registered providers (RP's) including the council, in Portsmouth use different tenancy types and rent levels in the provision of social/ affordable housing.
- 5.3. Some RPs are now able to offer fixed term tenancies (also known as Flexible Tenancies). Flexible tenancies must be for a minimum period of 2 years. However in practice, most RPs who have opted for flexible tenancies have decided to offer a 5 year fixed term period.
- 5.4. It also sets out what information the council will expect to receive from its RPs in relation to conversions from social to affordable rent, and where flexible tenancies have not been renewed.
- 5.5. This will allow the council to monitor affordability of social housing in Portsmouth and to understand the effectiveness of flexible tenancies, which will then be reported annually to the Cabinet Member for Housing.

6. Reasons for recommendations

- 6.1. To ensure that the council's Tenancy Strategy is up to date, the council meets its legislative obligations, and creates guidance to the councils registered provider partners.
- 6.2. The changes to the tenancy strategy are considered minor and do not require a formal consultation process. However a copy will be available for RPs and circulated as widely as possible.

7. Equality impact assessment

- 7.1. A preliminary equality impact assessment has been completed and a full equity impact assessment is not required.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1. There is a statutory duty on Local Housing Authorities to publish a tenancy strategy, as detailed within this report, under section 150 of the Localism Act 2011. This strategy must be kept under review and may be modified or replaced from time to time.
- 8.2. The tenancy strategy as attached to this report in Appendix 1 meets the requirements under section 150 of the Act and will assist the City Council in the exercise of its statutory duties and responsibilities.
- 8.3. It is within the Cabinet Member's powers to approve the recommendation being proposed.

9. Director of Finance's comments

- 9.1. There are no direct financial implications as a result of approving this Tenancy strategy.
- 9.2. The cost of devising the strategy were met from existing cash limits.

Signed by:

James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Building Services)

Appendices:

1. Tenancy Strategy
2. Preliminary Equalities Impact Assessment

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
PCC Housing Allocations Policy 2019	https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/portsmouth-housing-allocation-scheme.pdf
Localism Act 2011	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

.....
Signed by:
Councillor Sanders
Cabinet Member for Housing

Portsmouth City Council

Tenancy Strategy 2019-2024

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Under the Localism Act 2011 every local housing authority in England has a duty to prepare and publish a tenancy strategy. This is the tenancy strategy provided by Portsmouth City Council ("the city council") to cover the Portsmouth local authority area. The strategy must set out the matters which Registered Providers (RPs), who provide social housing within their area, must have regard to in formulating policies relating to:-
- the kind of tenancies they grant
 - the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind
 - where they grant tenancies for a specific term, the lengths of the terms, and
 - the circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy when an existing tenancy comes to an end.
- 1.2 The strategy also includes the city council's approach to granting tenancies to its own social housing stock.
- 1.3 It is important to note that RPs need only to have regard to the tenancy strategy in developing their tenancy policies and are not legally obliged to follow it. However the city council requests that RPs in Portsmouth review their tenancy policies in line with this strategy in order to ensure that wherever possible their policies work to complement, and do not contradict, this strategy.
- 1.4 RPs operating in Portsmouth include non-profit making and charitable housing associations registered with Homes England and the Regulator for Social Housing. This includes the council as a landlord of social housing.
- 1.5 The term 'affordable housing' in the context of this strategy covers properties let at either a social or affordable rent.

2.0 Scope / Overview

- 2.1 Section 150 of the Localism Act 2011 places a duty on every local housing authority to publish a tenancy strategy. All registered providers of social housing should then have regard to this tenancy strategy in framing their own tenancy policies.
- 2.2 The tenancy strategy must summarise the policies relating to tenancies or explain where they may be found.
- 2.3 The Act states that a local housing authority must have regard to its tenancy strategy in exercising its own housing management functions.
- 2.4 A local housing authority must keep its tenancy strategy under review, and may modify or replace it from time to time.

3.0 Strategy Preparation

- 3.1 Before adopting a tenancy strategy, or making a modification to it reflecting a major change of policy, the authority must:
- 3.1.1 send a copy of the draft strategy, or proposed modification, to every private registered provider of social housing for its district
 - 3.1.2 give the private registered provider a reasonable opportunity to comment on those proposals.
 - 3.1.3 consult such other persons as the Secretary of State may by regulations prescribe.

The authority must, in preparing or modifying a tenancy strategy, have regard to its current allocation scheme under section 166A of the Housing Act 1996, & (b) its current homelessness strategy under section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002

4.0 Background

- 4.1 There are many RPs, including the council, who provide affordable housing in Portsmouth. Most RPs offer nomination rights to tenancies to the council via Letting Agreements, and homes are allocated and let via the city council's central Housing Register, in line with its Allocations Policy. A list of all of the RPs with which the city council has a Lettings Agreement is available on the city council's website.

5.0 Flexible Tenancies

- 5.1 Some RPs are now able to offer fixed term tenancies (also known as Flexible Tenancies). Flexible tenancies must be for a minimum period of 2 years. However in practice, most RPs who have opted for flexible tenancies have decided to offer a 5 year fixed term period.
- 5.2 The key driver for the introduction of fixed term tenancies is to enable RP's to make better use of the housing stock enabling housing need to be reviewed when a fixed term tenancy period is drawing to an end.
- 5.3 Where flexible tenancies are to be offered the following minimum standards are recommended:-
- 5.3.1 Any fixed term should be for a minimum of 5 years in accordance with Homes England and the Regulator for Social Housing guidance.
 - 5.3.2 Tenancy policies should recognise the benefit of a period of stability for those with young families and children in education.
 - 5.3.3 Flexible tenancies for family sized properties with adaptations are encouraged so that best use can be made of properties in low supply.
 - 5.3.4 If a flexible tenancy is not being renewed on the basis of under-occupation it is expected that RPs offer a smaller alternative within their own stock, or through partnership working with other providers and allow the tenant to remain housed until an alternative is found.
 - 5.3.5 Flexible tenancies must not be used as a substitute for dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour or ending failing tenancies in a timely way, although these may be relevant considerations when deciding whether a tenancy should be renewed.
 - 5.3.6 The criteria for not renewing a tenancy must be clearly published in accordance with the requirements of the legislation.
 - 5.3.7 The city council expects to be notified of all decisions not to renew a tenancy to enable housing advice to be provided for those households affected.
- 5.4 Currently the city council, when acting as a social landlord, offers secure lifetime tenancies and do not offer flexible tenancies.

6.0 Affordable Rents

- 6.1 The 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review introduced 'affordable rent' as a new form of social housing and the main type of new housing supply for the future. The new regime enabled RPs to let a property at an 'affordable rent' (inclusive of service charges, where applicable) of up to 80% of the gross open market rent (OMR) in the area for a comparable property taking account its size, location and the services being provided. Homes let under the existing regime of target rents are typically let at between 50-60% of open market rental value (OMR). In addition, where an RP had an approved development programme, an affordable rent could be set on a proportion of its existing relets; the additional revenue

raised was used to help fund, in part, the development of new affordable homes. (This excludes the city council who are unable to convert existing properties from a Social rent to affordable rent when void).

- 6.2 The city council prefer and encourage RPs to deliver homes at Social Rent/Target Rent levels, and as a minimum that all tenancies be within Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. It will take rent levels into consideration when nominating applicants from the central Housing Register via the Portsmouth Allocations Scheme.
- 6.3 The city council believes that affordable housing products, of all different types, should be available for those who would have traditionally been housed in social rented properties. It does not therefore expect RPs to require deposits, or to exclude applicants on the basis of onerous referencing.
- 6.4 The city council expects RPs to offer advice to their tenants who are likely to be affected by changes to circumstance, taking into consideration any changes to legislation, benefit changes etc.
- 6.5 The city council expects RPs to provide information on the number of conversions from Social Rent to Affordable Rent on an annual basis, and where relevant, progress towards any set targets for this.

7.0 Consultation

- 7.1 The city council will circulate this version of the Tenancy Strategy to RPs when it is reviewed or modified.
- 7.2 If significant amendments to the strategy are made then a formal consultation will be required.

8.0 Review and Publication

- 8.1 The city council will monitor how the strategy is working in practice and review and update it as required. In particular there is a need to understand:
 - 8.1.1 The number of social rent and affordable rent homes created, including the number of conversions by RPs
 - 8.1.2 How many fixed term tenancies have been offered, renewed, not renewed and the reasons for these.
 - 8.1.3 The outcomes for those people whose tenancies are not renewed, including in particular any cases of homelessness
- 8.2 RPs are asked to provide annual updates on the above in order that the city council can review this strategy using this and other relevant information. The city council will also provide regular opportunities to meet with RPs to discuss issues relating to this policy and its implementation.
- 8.3 A copy of the strategy will be published by the city council and made available for inspection on request at any of the council's Area Housing Offices, Civic Offices or direct request to the Cabinet Member for Housing. Members of the public may also make a request for a hard copy of this strategy.
- 8.4 Each Registered Provider will publish their relevant Tenancy Policy on their respective website.

Glossary of terms

Affordable housing: Includes social rented housing, affordable rented housing and low cost home ownership such as shared ownership.

Affordable Rent: Rents offered by RPs of social housing at up to 80% of the rent that would be charged if the property were let in the open market.

Fixed term tenancy: A flexible tenancy with a fixed start and finish date, usually for 5 years.

Homes England: The national housing and regeneration agency for England, responsible for allocating funding for new affordable housing.

Homelessness duty: A local authority owes the "main homelessness duty" when the authority is satisfied that a homeless household is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a specified priority need group. Where this duty is owed, the authority must ensure that suitable accommodation is available to the household.

Local Housing Allowance: The current published maximum level of housing benefit payable for particular types of property, based on bedroom size and location.

Market rent: The rental income level that a property would most probably command on the open market if rented privately.

Regulator of Social Housing: The new central Regulator for all Social Housing Providers, including Housing Associations and Local Authorities.

Social rent: Rent levels for Social Housing for which guideline target rents are determined through a National Rent Regime aimed at helping ensure that all Social Rent levels are brought into line and are comparable. Social Rents are usually significantly lower than market rent levels.

Target Rents: A rent calculated by applying a formula from National Government first introduced in 2002 to bring consistency to social rent levels charged across all providers.

Tenancy policy: A RP's policy that defines how the provider will make decisions about the types of tenancy they will provide to tenants.

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Equality Impact Assessment

Preliminary assessment form 2018

www.portsmouthccg.nhs.uk

www.portsmouth.gov.uk

The preliminary impact assessment is a quick and easy screening process. It should:

- identify those policies, projects, services, functions or strategies which require a full EIA by looking at:
 - negative, positive or no impact on any of the equality groups
 - How are going to mitigate or remove any potential negative impacts
 - opportunity to promote equality for the equality groups
 - data / feedback
- prioritise if and when a full EIA should be completed
- justify reasons for why a full EIA is not going to be completed

Directorate:

Housing, neighbourhood & building services

Service, function:

Local Authority Housing

Title of policy, service, function, project or strategy (new or old) :

Tenancy Strategy Local Authority Housing

Type of policy, service, function, project or strategy:

- ☒ Existing
- ☐ New / proposed
- ☐ Changed

Q1 - What is the aim of your policy, service, function, project or strategy?

To meet our obligations under current legislation and to ensure that all Social Housing Providers operating in the Portsmouth LA area, offer Tenancy Types in line with Legislation and current demand. In addition to this, to try and establish the levels and types of rent levels across all Social Housing Stock.

Q2 - Who is this policy, service, function, project or strategy going to benefit or have a detrimental effect on and how?

The Tenancy Strategy is aimed at informing PCC and all social housing providers about the types of tenancies we want offered to any person seeking social housing via the Local Authorities central housing register. It should not have a detrimental affect on anyone with protected characteristics.

Q3 - Thinking about each group below, does, or could the policy, service, function, project or strategy have a negative impact on members of the equality groups below?

Group	Negative	Positive / no impact	Unclear
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other excluded groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note:Other excluded groups examples includes,Homeless, rough sleeper and unpaid carers. Many forms of exclusion are linked to financial disadvantage. How will this change affect people on low incomes, in financial crisis or living in areas of greater deprivation?

If the answer is "negative" or "unclear" consider doing a full EIA

If there are any potential negative impacts on any of the protected characteristics, What have you put in place to mitigate or remove the negative impacts/barriers?

N/A

Q4 - Does, or could the policy, service, function, project or strategy help to promote equality for members of the equality groups? e.g. A new service has been created for people with a disability to help them gain employment this would mean that this helps promote equality for the protected characteristic of disability only.

Group	Yes	No	Unclear
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy or maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other excluded groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If the answer is "no" or "unclear" consider doing a full EIA

Q5 - Do you have any feedback data from the equality groups that influences, affects or shapes this policy, service, function, project or strategy?

Please add in the text boxes below what feedback / meetings you have attended for each specific protected characteristic

Group	Positive or negative feedback
Age	No
Disability	No

Race	No
Sex	No
Gender reassignment	No
Sexual orientation	No
Religion or belief	No
Pregnancy and maternity	No
Marriage & civil partnership	No
Other excluded groups	No

Q6 - Using the assessments in questions 3, 4 and 5 should a full assessment be carried out on this policy, service, function or strategy?

☐ yes ☒ No

PCC staff-If you have to complete a full EIA please contact the Equalities and diversity team if you require help Tel: 023 9283 4789 or email: equalities@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

CCG staff-If you have to complete a full EIA please email: sehccg.equalityanddiveristy@nhs.net if you require help

Q7 - How have you come to this decision? Summarise your findings and conclusion below

The Tenancy Strategy covers PCC and all Registered Providers on the use of Tenancy Types and also monitors rent levels, it is not targeted at individuals or groups of people requiring social housing, therefore there is no impact on individuals or groups from this strategy. However, previously adapted properties or properties developed for particular groups or needs, will be retained and used for those groups.

Q8 - Who was involved in the EIA?

Mark Fitch

This EIA has been approved by: Paul Fielding

Contact number: 07939605925

Date: 30/08/2019

PCC staff-Please email a copy of your completed EIA to the Equality and diversity team. We will contact you with any comments or queries about your preliminary EIA.

Telephone: 023 9283 4789, Email: equalities@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

CCG staff-Please email a copy of your completed EIA to the Equality lead who will contact you with any comments or queries about your preliminary . Email: sehccg.equalityanddiversity@nhs.net

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Agenda Item 5

Page 1 of 5

Agenda item:

Title of meeting: Cabinet Member for Housing Decision Making

Date of meeting: 21st October 2019

Subject: Making the Private Rented Sector easier and safer

Report by: James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. To update members on the current issues in the Private Rented Sector, and outline some of the options available to tackle this.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Cabinet Member for Housing notes the report on *Making the Private Rented Sector easier and safer* (Appendix 1).
- 2.2. That officers are tasked with developing a proposed Private Rented Sector Strategy for consideration by councillors in early 2020.
- 2.3. That officers undertake informal consultation with stakeholders, using this report as a basis for encouraging views and ideas on how to make the private rented sector safer and easier to access.

3. Background

- 3.1. It is estimated that there are approximately 20,000 residential properties in Portsmouth which are in the private rented sector (PRS). This is approximately 20% of all homes.
- 3.2. Private rented homes are those where a landlord, either directly or through a lettings agency, provides the use of a property at a level of rent which is determined by the market. The tenant usually has an assured shorthold tenancy (although other types do exist) and can provide flexible accommodation with predictable monthly costs where they will not need to pay large unexpected repair bills. However market rents are usually much higher than social or affordable rents, with the average three-bed property rent in Portsmouth being approximately £900pcm. Also the tenant usually has less security than in social rented properties.

3.3. Officers have produced a report which outlines the known national and local data surrounding the use of the PRS as well as methods used elsewhere to make PRS homes safer to live in and easier to access. This is Appendix 1.

4. **Problems faced by those in the Private Rented Sector**

4.1. Problems for some living in the PRS can be broadly summarised by the following;

- 4.1.1. Poor living conditions
- 4.1.2. Rent affordability
- 4.1.3. Lack of security of tenure
- 4.1.4. Rent arrears and resulting evictions
- 4.1.5. Issues around the statutorily homeless and other vulnerable people

4.2. Problems faced by some PRS landlords can be broadly summarised as follows

- 4.2.1. Non-payment of rent
- 4.2.2. Attracting and keeping tenants at a level of rent which is economically viable.
- 4.2.3. Antisocial behaviour
- 4.2.4. Maintenance of the property structure and services
- 4.2.5. Maintaining flexibility over the use of a capital asset

5. **Potential Options**

5.1. There are a range of potential options which have been previously used in Portsmouth, or used elsewhere, which could be adopted to deal with the problems outlined. These are illustrative only at this stage and all, some or none of them may be pursued depending upon the direction of travel outlined within the strategy.

5.2. **Additional Licensing of HMOs** in the city which do not currently fall under the mandatory HMO licensing criteria (of 5 or more occupants).

5.3. **Selective licensing of all private rented properties**, not just HMOs. Experience in other councils that have implemented this shows that this requires a significant amount of time to consult on and plan to deliver.

5.4. **Targeted proactive inspections** in certain areas of the city using the powers of entry for inspection given to councils under Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004.

5.5. **Use of an accreditation scheme**, rather than licencing, so as to promote good landlords. This could be the council's own existing scheme or one working with national and local landlord associations.

5.6. **Compulsory landlord registration**, which is not currently legislative in England, but is active in the rest of the UK, and therefore likely to be introduced nationally in the future.

5.7. **Educating tenants about their rights and responsibilities**, including routes of redress, and how to access support, and advice for neighbours.

- 5.8. **Help for Housing Associations** of social housing by outlining a protocol for dealing with disrepair complaints by their tenants, and when it would be appropriate for the council to intervene and the consequences of such intervention.

6. **Private Rented Sector Strategy**

- 6.1. All of the above options are complex and, if not carefully introduced with the correct knowledge, resources and/or enforcement regimes, could lead to significant problems for individuals and the PRS market across Portsmouth.
- 6.2. Whilst options used in other areas may be of interest, the PRS market in Portsmouth, as in all areas, is unique. The nature of the properties, geography, demographics, large student population and local housing market will all play a factor in meaning that simply adopting what has been used elsewhere may well result in unintended consequences.
- 6.3. Through the research for this report it has become clear that there needs to be a clear strategy that makes the PRS easier and safer. This should do the following:
- 6.3.1. Build upon Appendix 1 to find the data and case studies which can be used as an evidence to create a strategy.
 - 6.3.2. In conjunction with legislation and national strategies, outline the council's approach to the PRS in Portsmouth in a strategic document.
- 6.4. Upon adoption of the strategy, officers will subsequently develop a high level action plan, with a clear timetable and milestones, to deliver changes.
- 6.5. Development of this strategy will be undertaken by the current Private Sector Housing Service using existing resources. However the subsequent work to develop and deliver the action plan may require additional resources not currently within the relevant budgets. An overview of the resources needed will be outlined alongside the strategy.

7. **Reasons for the Recommendation**

- 7.1. The number of people involved in the PRS in Portsmouth, either as tenants or as landlords, is significant. Therefore it is vital that the city has a successful private rented sector for all involved.
- 7.2. It is important that any change is made carefully to avoid unintended detrimental impacts upon tenants or landlords. Change must be carefully considered and properly consulted upon. Therefore a well-researched and evidenced strategy is needed upon which actions can be based.
- 7.3. Until a formal strategy is adopted, there are no proposals upon which a formal consultation can take place. However officers will use this report, and Appendix 1, as a basis to gather any general comments about the PRS. These can be sent to the email address housingstrategy@portsmouthcc.gov.uk until 1st December 2019.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 8.1. The main body of this report regards information to councillors. Therefore an EIA is not required at this stage, as confirmed by the council's Access & Equality Advisor. However an Equalities Impact Assessment will be needed for any future PRS Strategy and Action Plan.

9. Legal

- 9.1. The recommendations in this report do not, at this stage, have any legal implications and it is within the Cabinet Member's powers to approve these. The actions being proposed will assist the council to comply with the recommendations set out in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's "Rogue Landlord Enforcement - Guidance for Local Authorities" published April 2019.

10. Finance

- 10.1 There are no financial implications to the Council as a result of the recommendations within this report.

Signed by:

.....
James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Making the Private Rented Sector safer and easier

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
MHCLG - Rogue Landlord Enforcement (April 2019)	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/808059/Rogue_Landlord_Enforcement_-_Guidance_for_LAs.pdf
UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence - The Private Rented Sector in the UK (July 2019)	https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/TDS-Overview-paper_final.pdf
Office of National Statistics - Dwelling stock by tenure (Jan 2019)	https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/subnationaldwellingstockbytenureestimates
MHCLG - Open Data on dwelling stock	http://opendatacommunities.org/data/housing-market/dwelling-stock/tenure
Chartered Institution of Housing - UK Housing Review	https://www.ukhousingreview.org.uk/
MHCLG - National Planning Policy Framework	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf
MHCLG - English Private Landlord Survey (2018)	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-private-landlord-survey
The Centre for Housing Policy - The Evolving Private Rented Sector	http://www.nationwidefoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Private-Rented-Sector-report.pdf
MHCLG - English Housing survey 2016-2017	https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2016-to-2017-private-rented-sector

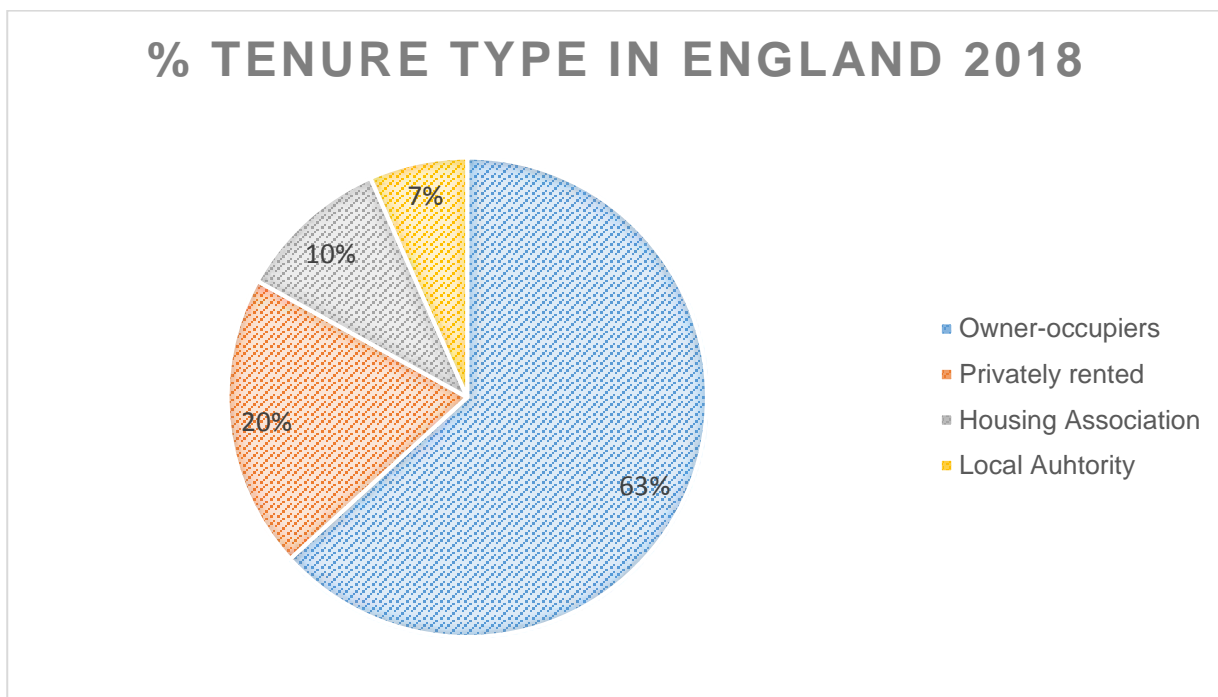
The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

.....
Signed by:
Councillor Sanders
Cabinet Member for Housing

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1 Introduction

1.1 It is estimated that there were 24,200,000 dwellings in England in 2018, split by a range of tenure as shown in the following graph (MHCLG, Dwelling Stock Estimates: 31 March 2018, England).



1.2 In Portsmouth, approximately 41% of homes are rented, while 59% are owner occupied (with or without a mortgage). Of those who rent their home, around 47% (n = 17,180) are in social housing (local authority or housing association homes) and 53% (n = 19,738) rent from a private landlord, which could be an individual, a company or a lettings agency.

Table 1: Estimates of dwelling stock in Portsmouth by tenure¹

Tenure	Number of homes	Percentage of total dwelling stock
Owner occupied	52,882	58.9%
Private rented	19,738	22.0%
Total private sector	72,620	80.9%

¹ 2016 data <http://opendatacommunities.org/data/housing-market/dwelling-stock/tenure> and <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/subnationaldwellingstockbytenureestimates>

City council rented	10,080	11.2%
Housing association and other public sector	7,100	7.9%
Total public sector	17,180	19.1%
Total	89,800	100%

1.3 Private Rented Sector (PRS) landlords can be a range of different people/organizations. In 2018, half of landlords owned only one property for rent, whilst 17% owned five or more properties. However these larger landlords accounted for nearly 48% of the sector.²

1.4 The PRS is the biggest provider of non-owner occupier homes in England, it is estimated there are approximately 1.5million landlords and 3.4 million deposits on the estimated 4.7million private properties.

1.5 The reasons for providing private rental housing are varied, with the main reason landlords seeing it as an investment. From a tenants point of view it provides flexible accommodation with predictable monthly costs where they will not need to pay large unexpected repair bills. However market rents are usually much higher than social or affordable rents. The following table demonstrates the variations in rent levels in Portsmouth by tenancy type.

Rent levels by property size (£ monthly)

Size	Valuation Office Agency Full market rent data Oct 2017-Sep 2018 (Portsmouth UA) (latest available)			Affordable rents (approximate based on 80% of mean full market rents)	PCC average rents (including general service charge) 2019/20	
	Lower quartile	Median	Mean			
Shared	340	395	412	329.60	n/a	
Studio	450	525	536	428.80	n/a	
1 bed	550	595	615	492.00	Flat	383.64
					House	374.49
2 bed	685	750	770	616.00	Flat	418.02
					House	412.60
3 bed	817	895	912	729.60	Flat	453.20
					House	443.35
4 bed	1,238.00	1,400.00	1,527.00	1,221.60	House	483.58

² MHCLG, English Private Landlord Survey 2018, Main report

1.6 The PRS is covered by various regulations, usually enforced by local authorities. There is no independent governance of the individual business other than by the landlord, although there are a number of national landlord associations.

1.7 The number of PRS landlords has risen rapidly in recent years as home ownership has become increasingly unaffordable and the number of social homes has fallen.

1.8 Although the estimates are broadly correct, most local authorities, including this the city council, do not know precisely how many of the approximately 100,000 homes in Portsmouth are owned by a landlord and then rented to a tenant, either on a tenancy or license. This is called the Private Rental Sector and is an important part of the housing provision in Portsmouth. It is therefore vital that it works well for both tenants and landlords if the city is to see thriving communities and economic and social regeneration.

1.9 The council agreed the creation of the Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Governance Board in 2018 which consists of representatives from the University, Students Union, local landlord association, Council officers, and cabinet member for housing, and it has met to understand issues surrounding HMOs. Some of the learning of this group has been used in this information report to look at.

1.10 Mean average Rent levels by property size (£ monthly)

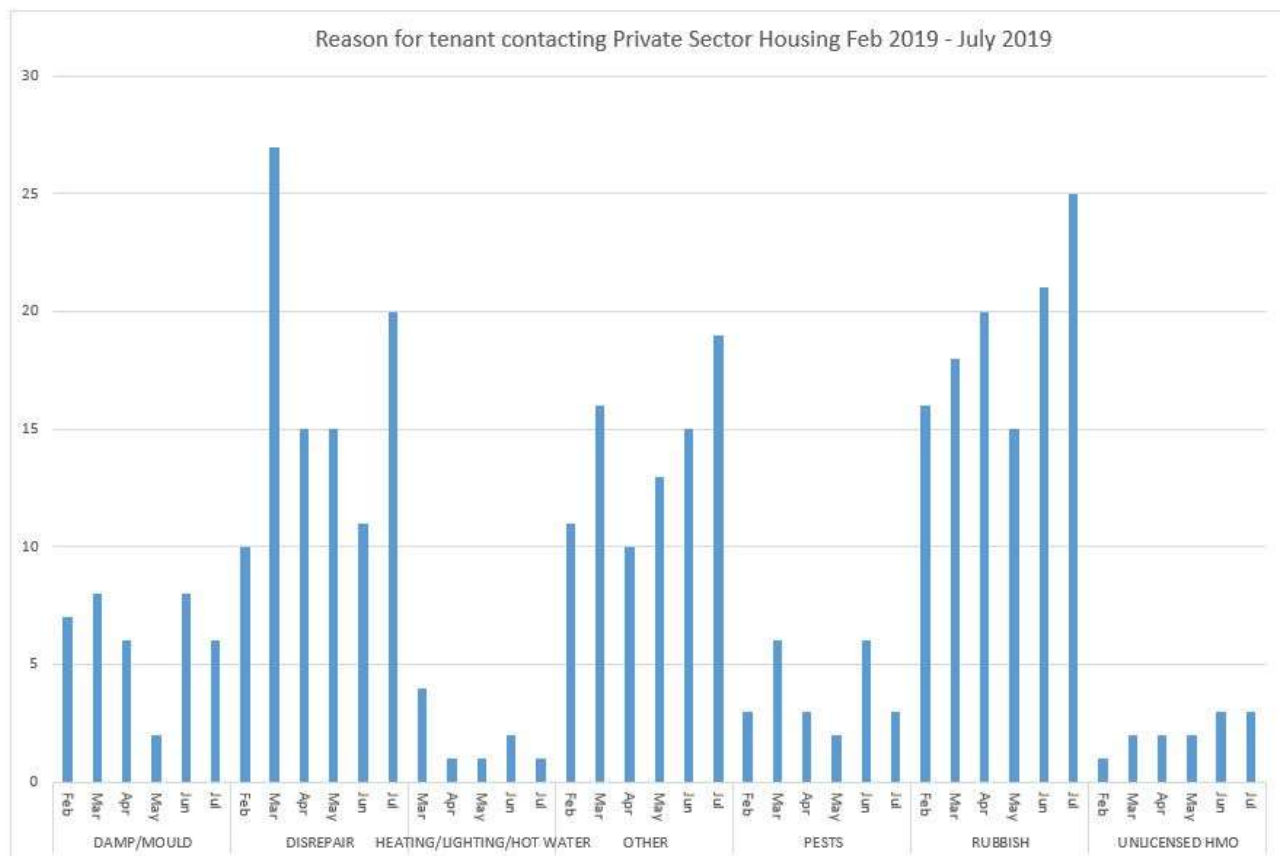
Size	Local Housing Allowance 2019/20	PCC data January 2018 average market rents		PCC average rents (including general service charge) 2019/20 <i>(NB; this follows years of Govt-imposed rent cuts)</i>	'Living Rent' Based on 2018 lower quartile earnings
Shared	300.00	n/a		n/a	n/a
Studio	521.56	n/a		346.75	n/a
1 bed	521.56	Flat	623.83	383.64	320.10
		House	623.54	374.49	
2 bed	646.09	Flat	764.96	418.02	416.10
		House	803.64	412.60	
3 bed	772.50	Flat	904.42	453.20	512.15
		House	984.25	443.35	
4 bed	1,042.86	House	1,244.81	483.58	n/a

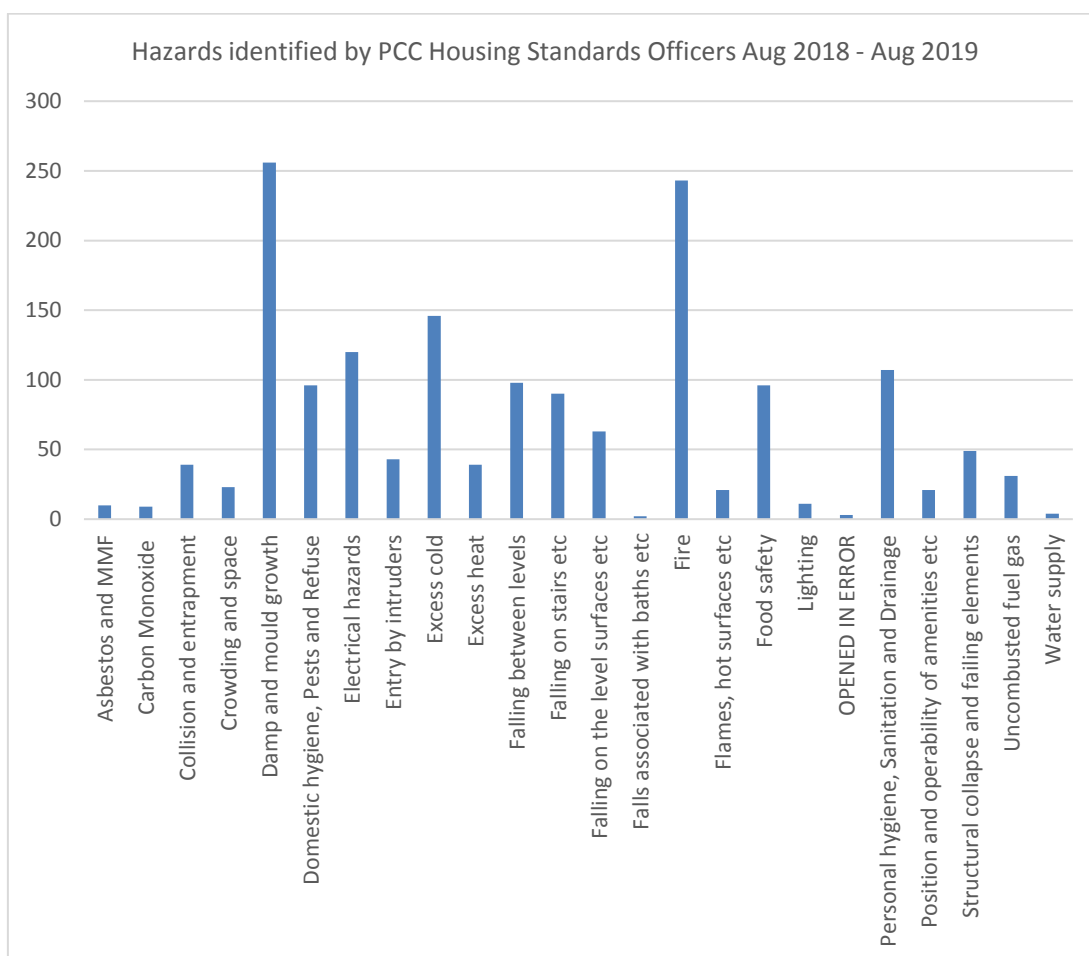
2 What are some of the reasons for an unsuccessful PRS tenancy?

There are a number of issues in the PRS which mean that tenants may not feel safe or secure renting privately, or may feel unable to access it in the first place. It is also the case that some people may choose to join the council's housing waiting list and wait to be offered social housing, despite what could be a significant wait, rather than enter the PRS. Some of the key reasons for this are as follows.

2.1 Poor living conditions

The Housing Health & Safety Rating Scheme (HHSRS) is a risk-based assessment tool, used by council officers, that identifies hazards in dwellings and evaluates their potential effects on the health and safety of occupants and their visitors. Hazards that are identified are scored on their severity of harm and categorised as either Category 1 (the most sever) or Category 2 Hazards (less severe, but still may have a significant impact on property occupants).





National studies show that PRS properties are more likely than other tenures to fail the statutory minimum standard for housing. In 2017, 14% (691,000) of privately rented dwellings had at least one Category 1 hazard compared with 11% of owner occupied and 6% of social rented homes³.

However a 2014 national study by Shelter of private renters found that only 8% had complained to their local authority about property conditions. This suggests that tenants either do not know how to report problems with living conditions, or are concerned to do so for fear of repercussions.

The English Housing Survey in 2017-18 found that the PRS had the highest proportion of non-decent homes. The decent homes standard sets out requirements that properties should be free from serious hazards under the HHSRS, and have amenities such as kitchen and bathroom that meet modern standards, be in a reasonable state of repair and thermal comfort. 36% of properties at the lowest quintile of rent are non-decent. 25% of homes in the private rented sector were non-decent according to the Decent Homes Standard. This compares with 19% of owner occupied, and 13% of socially rented homes. In this same report, according to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, 14% of privately rented homes had at least one Category 1 hazard,

³ MHCLG English Housing Survey, Private Rented Sector 2016-17

compared with 11% of owner occupied homes, and 6% of those in the social rented sector.

The standard of the property has also been shown to drop as the length of tenancy increases, with 42% of households renting in the same property for more than ten years shown to be classified as non-decent accommodation, compared to 25% of households where the tenancy was one year or less.⁴

Figure 2.5: Non-decent homes, by tenure, 2007 to 2017

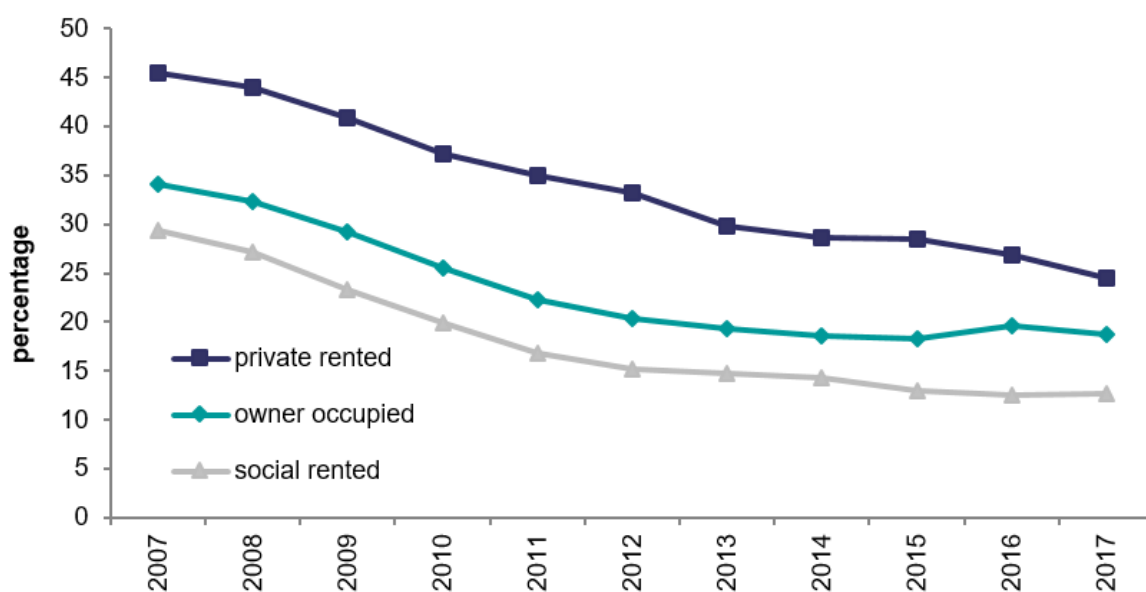
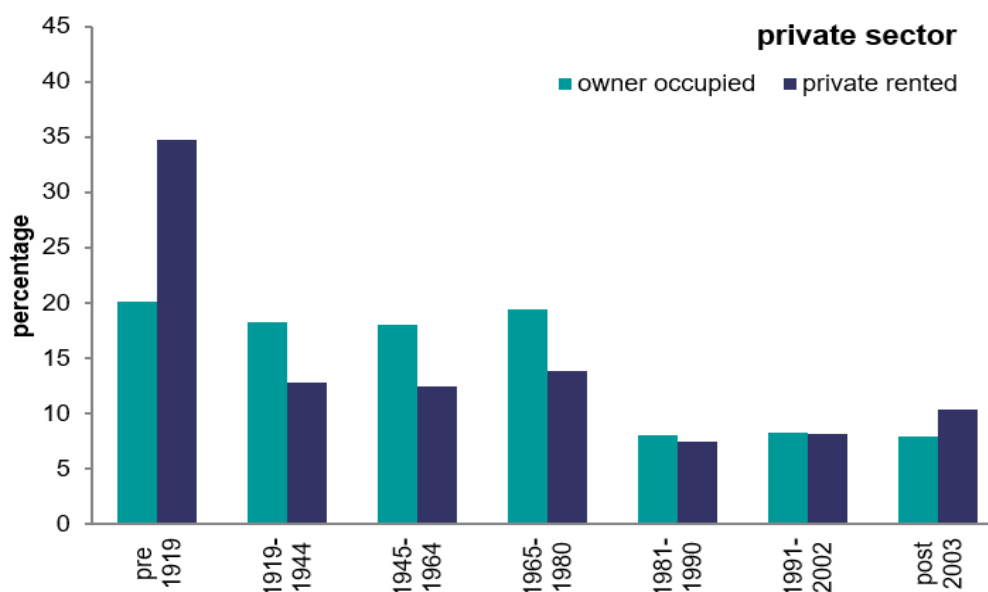


Figure 2.2: Dwelling age, by tenure, 2017



⁴ The Evolving Private Rented Sector: Its Contribution and Potential, Julie Rugg and David Rhodes, University of York Centre for Housing Policy 2018

Figure 2.3: Dwelling type, by tenure, 2017

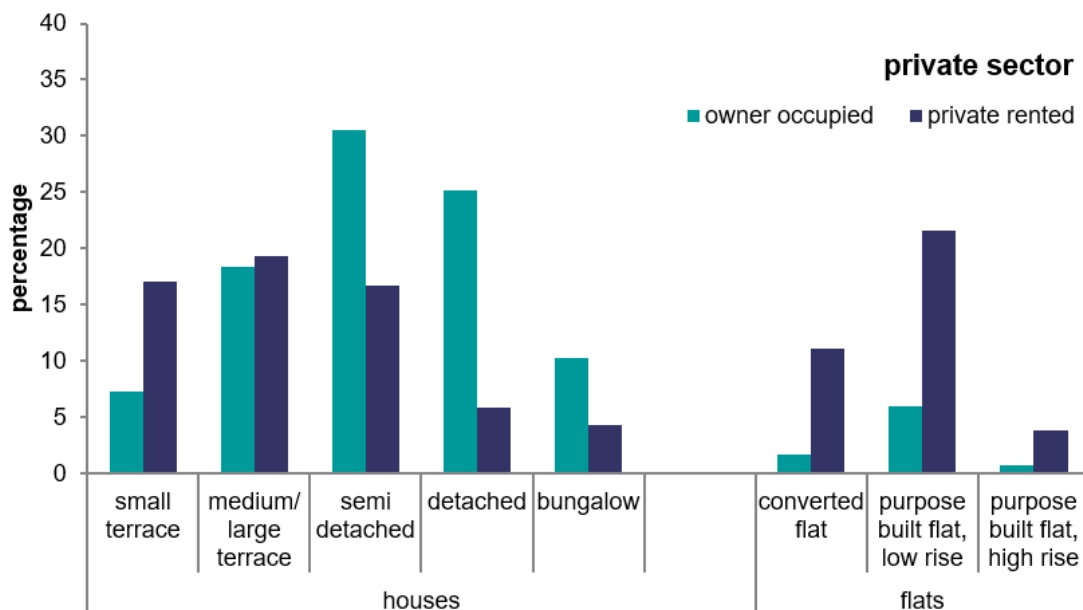
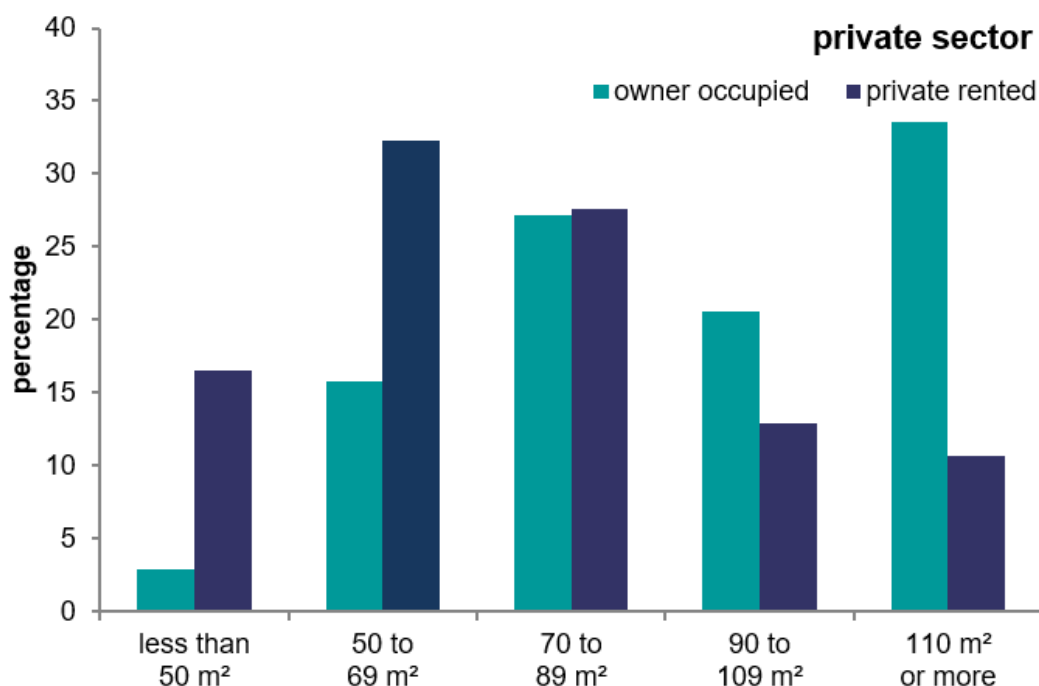


Figure 2.4: Usable floor area, by tenure, 2017



Local authorities can act to ensure landlords remedy poor living conditions using a range of powers outlined in various pieces of legislation. However this currently relies upon the local authority being made aware of poor living conditions, usually by tenants, and then reacting to a request to investigate.

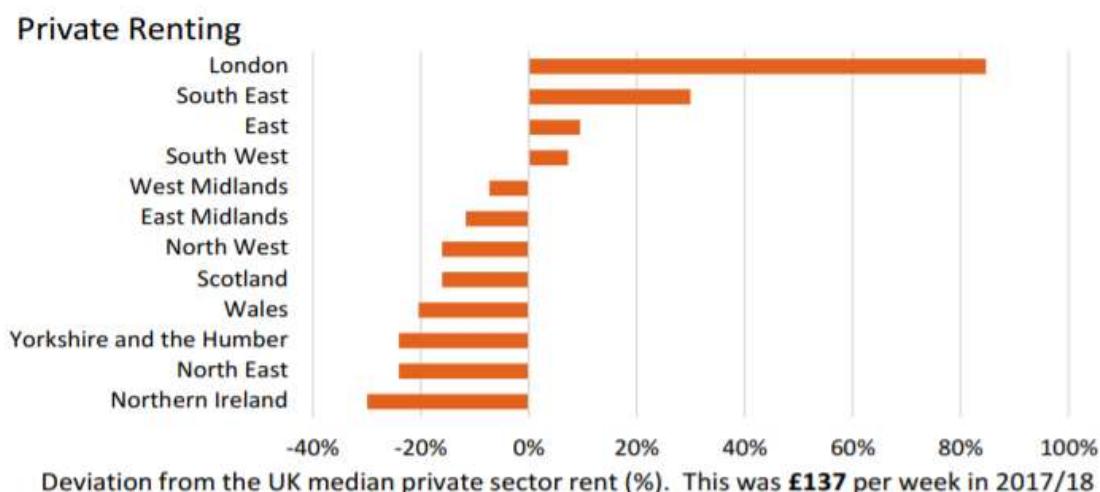
Some tenants may not report poor living conditions due to concerns that they will face repercussions such as rent increases, or they will be subject to a retaliatory eviction. Whilst the majority of landlords will not act in this way, the perception that this may happen can influence tenant behaviour. It is likely to be those with the lowest

household incomes that are likely to be living in the cheapest accommodation and may find themselves living in the poorest conditions. The fear that raising an objection may lead to an eviction when there is nothing else affordable may lead to some tenants accepting housing conditions which do not meet required standards.

2.2 Rent Affordability

Approximately one in five PRS tenants in England receives Housing Benefit (HB). Of these, 85% report the benefit covered part of their rent.⁵ Private renters were less likely than social renters to use HB to cover the whole rent (13% vs 54%).

76% of private renters report paying a deposit at the start of their current tenancy. About three quarters (73%) of these say this deposit was protected in one of the Government-authorised tenancy deposit protection schemes. One fifth (20%) did not know whether their deposit was registered with one of these schemes. Where a deposit was paid, it was equivalent to either four weeks rent (42%) or more than four weeks rent (44%).



The gap between market rents and Housing Benefit (HB) or Universal Credit (UC) payments continues to be an issue. It is increasingly difficult for low earners, or those on full HB, to find properties to rent in the private sector. This is compounded by many landlords often not wanting to take on tenants who receive benefits or who cannot provide a guarantor. Tenants can also find it very difficult to pay large rent deposits, or one month's rent, up front.

2.3 Lack of security of tenure

The English Housing Survey 2017-18 found that of those who had lived in their current PRS property for less than three years, 72% moved because they wanted to.

The main reasons for moving were job related (18%), to move to a better neighbourhood (16%) and to move to a larger home (13%).

⁵ MHCLG English Housing Survey, Private Rented Sector 2017-18

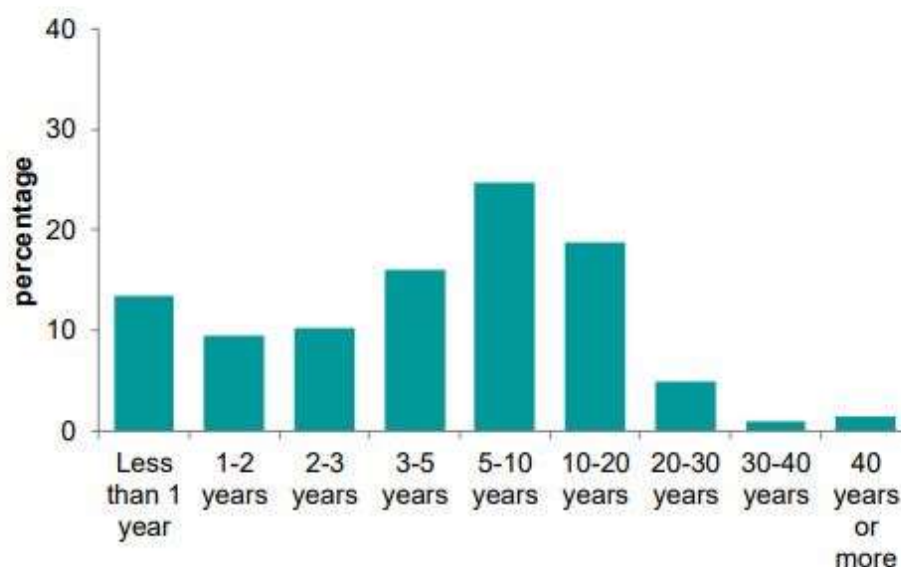
Of those who did not move solely by choice, reasons included being asked to move by a landlord (12%), moving on mutual agreement with a landlord (10%), and moving due to the end of a fixed term tenancy (8%).

National data has shown that PRS tenancies last, on average, for shorter periods than social renters or owner occupiers. The mean average length of tenure was 4.1 years for private renters compared to 11.9 years for social renters and 17.8 years for owner occupiers.

Short periods of residence of less than one year were reported by more than a quarter (27%) of private renters, but relatively less often by social renters (6%) or owner occupiers (4%). It should be noted that PRS is, by its nature, a more flexible form of tenure than social tenancy or owner occupation mainly due to the nature of the tenancies offered, and that many use the PRS for the reason that they have the flexibility to move relatively quickly and cheaply.

When PRS tenants are asked whether they felt that their notice period was adequate 69% felt the notice period gave them enough time to move. However of those asked 19% said that it was possible, and 13% felt it was definitely too short a period to find a new place to live.

Figure 3.1: Private renters' time in the private rented sector, 2017-18

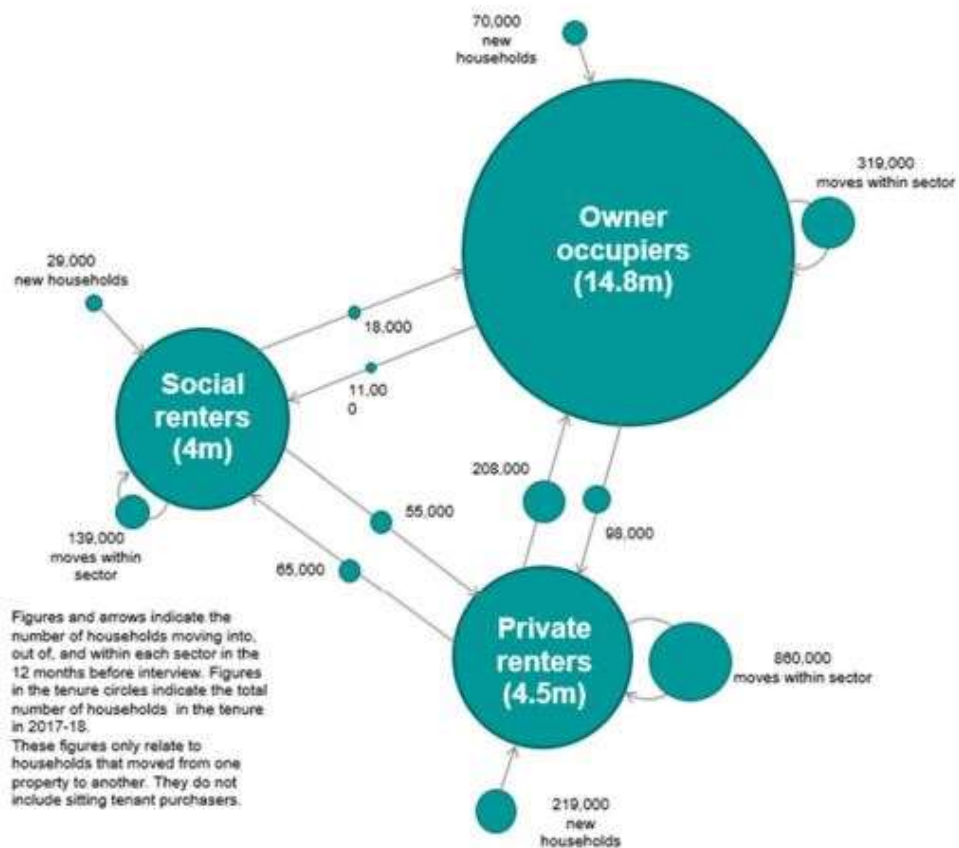


Base: all private renters

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.3

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

Figure 3.2: Household moves, by tenure 2017-18



Base: all households resident for less than one year.

Notes:

- 1) underlying data are presented in Headline Report, Annex Table 1.20
- 2) a small number of cases with inconsistent responses have been omitted
- 3) survey cannot identify the number of households which have ended

Source: 2017-18 English Housing Survey, full household sample

Some PRS tenants have concerns that their tenancies could be ended by their landlords through no fault of their own. Whilst tenants are protected during the fixed term of their tenancy, and landlords must follow a full eviction process providing at least two months' notice to end an assured-short hold tenancy once the fixed term has ended. Fixed tenancies are typically for periods of 6-12 months and longer term tenancies in private sector are rare. This lack of security is likely to be stressful for many, and may create financial pressures where tenants have to find additional money to secure deposits and rent up front for new tenancies at relatively short notice.

2.4 Rent arrears and resulting evictions

PRS landlords can legally end a private rented tenancy for a number of reasons including the so called 'no fault' eviction under Section 21 of the 1988 Housing Act. This section is used to serve a notice seeking possession either after a fixed term

tenancy has ended, where there is a written contract, or during a periodic tenancy where there is no fixed end date.

However, local authorities can take action to prosecute a landlord who illegally evicts or harasses a tenant.

At a national level studies have shown that excessive market rents are not endemic and the majority of tenants meet their rental payments without financial difficulty. Fewer than 10% are in arrears with their rent.⁶

However of those that have presented to the Housing Needs, Advice & Support team in Portsmouth as being homeless, 18% stated that their PRS had come to an end due to rent arrears (2018/19). This indicates that where tenants are in rent arrears, and leading to a likely eviction, a significant number will come to the council for help.

Linked to the affordability of rent, tenants who find themselves in rent arrears can face eviction if they are unable to address their arrears promptly. Rent arrears can happen for a variety of reasons, such as

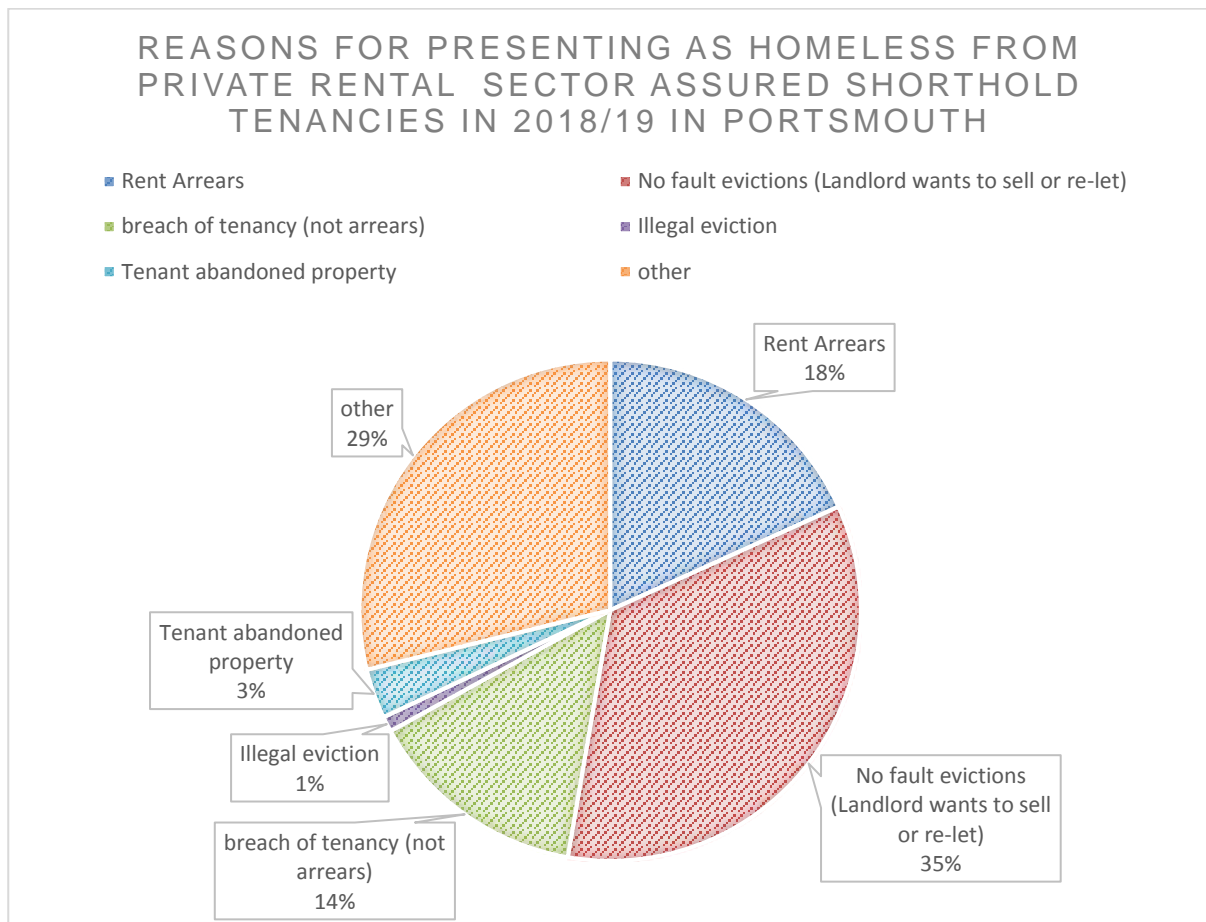
- loss or reduction in household income;
- change in circumstances such as separation from a partner;
- the financial strain of dependent children; or
- change in benefits entitlement

Tenants may also struggle to keep up with rental commitments, particularly if rental fees increase over time at a rate which is larger than the growth in spendable income.

2.5 Issues around the statutory homeless and other vulnerable people

The council's Housing Needs, Advice & Support Service had 1481 homeless approaches in 2018/19. Of these 406 (27.41%) were due to the end of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) (there were also 37 (2.5%) due to end of non-AST private sector tenancy).

⁶ The Evolving Private Rented Sector: Its Contribution and Potential, Julie Rugg and David Rhodes, University of York Centre for Housing Policy 2018



In 2017/18 approximately 6% of all PRS tenants across England contacted their local authority because they were homeless or about to become homeless, compared to 10% of social renters. Of those who contacted their local council, the majority formally asked the council to consider them homeless, although social renters were more likely to have done so (74% of private renters, 87% of social renters).

Analysis of data collected from those who present as homeless to the council shows that the largest single reason for people presenting as homeless is due to the ending of a PRS tenancy. The social renting sector also often provides a number of other support mechanisms, particularly for those who are vulnerable, have physical or mental health needs, a learning disability or substance misuse issues. These are often not available in the same way to those in the PRS.

3 The available means to the local authority to address issues with the PRS

The City Council's Private Sector Housing Service takes action to assist and enforce when tenants make it aware of problems they are experiencing with their rental property. However there are a number of additional/alternative actions and approaches which could be taken which may have an impact upon the PRS.

3.1 Additional Licensing for HMOs

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are properties rented out by at least three people not from one household (such as a family) but share facilities such as the bathroom and kitchen.

Planning permission is often required for an HMO and this is handled by the council's Planning Service. Therefore it, through the application of the HMO Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and related guidance can determine if a property can become a HMO and therefore, in effect, how many HMOs are in an area (planning permission is not required retrospectively so long-established HMOs do not require planning permission). The Private Sector Housing Service IS responsible for ensuring that HMOs meet the relevant standards, including space standards.

Some HMOs are already required to be part of a mandatory licencing scheme, as outlined in the report to Cabinet on 4th December 2018.

HMO Licensing is intended to ensure that:

- the landlord of an HMO is a fit and proper person (or employs a manager who is).
- each HMO is suitable for occupation by the number of people allowed under the licence (overcrowding is eliminated).
- the standard of management of the HMO is acceptable.
- vulnerable tenants are protected.
- high-risk HMOs can be identified and targeted for improvement (such as fire safety).

In 2013, the Council's then administration brought in an additional licensing scheme for all qualifying HMOs, such a scheme could only be introduced for a maximum period of 5 years and evidence had to show a need for additional controls over HMOs locally, and that suitable alternative options have been explored. Consultation with local landlords, tenants & residents would be required as part of this process. Licence conditions could be used to stipulate the condition of a property, but the inspections of licensed properties can allow for any poor conditions to be identified and acted upon by the inspecting officer.

It required all HMOs with three or more occupants to be licensed in postcode areas PO1, PO4 & PO5 (the areas of the city with the highest concentrations of HMOs at the time).

Legally, any renewal of additional licensing required evidence essentially that it had failed to deal with the problem that led to its introduction in the first place. That evidence was not available, therefore the scheme ceased in August 2018.

However, in October 2018 the government introduced changes to the mandatory HMO licensing criteria, meaning that all HMOs occupied by five or more tenants now require a mandatory license, whereas previously only HMOs with five or more tenants and consisting of three more storeys required did so. This means that currently only

HMOs with three or four tenants in the city do not require a license; any potential re-introduction of additional licensing would therefore focus on the licensing of some or all of those properties not currently covered by mandatory HMO licensing criteria. Licensing is required to be cost-neutral by setting the licensing fees to cover the cost of running the scheme.

3.2 Selective Licensing

This is the introduction of a local licensing policy focused on **all** PRS properties. Such a scheme can only be introduced for a maximum of 5 years and evidence must be available to show that there is a need for additional controls over private rental properties locally, and that suitable alternative options have been explored. Consultation with local landlords, tenants & residents would be required as part of this process. As with additional licencing, this cannot control the number or location of PRS properties. Even though a recent MHCLG review of this said it was a main reason to bring selective licensing, license conditions cannot be used to control the condition of a property. Instead, the inspection of licensed properties can allow for any poor conditions to be identified and acted upon by the inspecting officer.

Selective Licensing is intended to ensure that:

- the landlord is a fit and proper person (or employs a manager who is);
- each dwelling is suitable for occupation by the number of people allowed under the licence (overcrowding is eliminated);
- the standard of management of PRS properties is acceptable;
- vulnerable tenants are protected;
- high-risk properties can be identified and targeted for improvement (such as fire safety);

This scheme can be brought in to either part or all of a council area. Any scheme covering 20% or more either geographically or by number of PRS properties requires Secretary of State approval, as well as requiring significant resources.

Licensing is required to be cost-neutral by setting the fees to cover the cost of running the scheme. However, in practice a number of local authorities nationally have found that difficulties in accurately estimating the number of PRS properties have led to fee levels being set lower than needed for full cost recovery. This highlights the need for strong local data to be able to make informed decisions.

3.3 Use powers under the Housing Act 2004 to target small geographic areas for proactive inspection

Local authorities can use their powers to select small geographical areas where they have reason to believe (based upon evidence) that there may be poor property conditions or Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) for example (based upon location of previous complaints, high turnover of tenants in particular areas, areas of low household income etc.). All privately owned properties could be inspected in the area, with a particular focus on PRS but with an opportunity to also include working with owner/occupiers and empty property owners to make improvement to their properties

also. This would be funded and resourced by the council general fund rather than through licensing fees, but any enforcement charges levied against poor landlords identified in this way could be used to offset the cost of the resources required to undertake this element work.

3.4 National Landlord Registration

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) wants the Government to introduce landlord registration in England (similar to a compulsory selective licensing scheme) which would follow the regimes already seen in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This would ensure that local authorities would have information on all registered landlords and could instead focus on finding the landlords that fail to register. Whilst this is not currently legislative, it is possible it may be introduced in the future.

3.5 Advice for tenants

Many tenants are not aware of their rights, or the support available to them from the council and other agencies.

The Private Sector Housing Service is working on a corporate communications plan to ensure tenants are aware of their rights of redress and how to access support to do so.

3.6 Advice for Landlords

Landlord accreditation is operated in a number of areas and is defined in a variety of ways. It usually includes a system which "badges" a landlord who has or is, actively training towards a level of practice deemed acceptable by the accreditation authority and which might include, for example, a commitment to abide by a code of conduct devised by that authority. Accreditation might, alternatively, relate to property quality, or include some element of both property quality and management. Accreditation clearly has the potential to lead to improvement in property management and quality in policing landlords within the schemes and ensuring that those landlords have access to information, advice, and the opportunity for continuing professional development. These activities are particularly helpful both for landlords at early stages in their letting career, and for professional landlords who aim to keep up to date with changes in legislation and good practice guidance.

In Portsmouth the Landlord Accreditation scheme, operated through the Rent it Right website, was relaunched in 2017 and focuses on accrediting both landlords and their properties. Whilst it has developed since its launch, the current offering could be expanded further. This could include:

- More marketing to increase tenant awareness (the more tenants that choose to search for their next property through the scheme, the more incentive for landlords to join).
- A tougher property verification and test of landlord practices and competencies could prove to be a higher benchmark for landlords to want to strive for, and tenants to demand from their landlords (being accredited would be seen as a

way of demonstrating a standard of excellence as a landlord, and be very desirable to tenants).

- Providing better incentives and advantages for landlords wanting to be accredited would also help to grow the scheme (options like undertaking a structured training programme and commitment to rectify problems with a property rather than facing enforcement if it is the first time an issue has occurred for an accredited landlord - repeat offence or lack of action would still result in enforcement action).

3.7 Help for registered providers

The council already has good links with a number of local Housing Associations who are Registered Providers (RPs) of social housing, and these links can be used to establish protocols for dealing with complaints by their tenants. The Private Sector Housing Service, either directly or through third parties such as elected members, already receive such complaints. Tenants already have clear complaints procedures they can follow with their RP landlords, therefore the council could outline a more stringent, enforcement focused approach to cases where intervention by PCC is required to resolve problems between RPs and tenant with regard to poor property conditions.

4 Supporting information

The following list of information is not exhaustive on this subject but provides a range of sources

Title of document	Location
MHCLG - Rogue Landlord Enforcement (April 2019)	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/808059/Rogue_Landlord_Enforcement_-_Guidance_for_LAs.pdf
UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence - The Private Rented Sector in the UK (July 2019)	https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/TDS-Overview-paper_final.pdf
Office of National Statistics - Dwelling stock by tenure (Jan 2019)	https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/subnationaldwellingstockbytenureestimates
MHCLG - Open Data on dwelling stock	http://opendatacommunities.org/data/housing-market/dwelling-stock/tenure
Chartered Institution of Housing - UK Housing Review	https://www.ukhousingreview.org.uk/
MHCLG - National Planning Policy Framework	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf
MHCLG - English Private Landlord Survey (2018)	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-private-landlord-survey

The Centre for Housing Policy - The Evolving Private Rented Sector	http://www.nationwidefoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Private-Rented-Sector-report.pdf
MHCLG - English Housing survey 2016-2017	https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2016-to-2017-private-rented-sector

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