

# Daventry District Council's Review of Homelessness September 2019

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Evidence Base



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## Summary

This document forms Daventry District Council's evidence base completed in accordance with Section 1 of the Housing Act 2002 which places a duty on local authorities to undertake a homelessness review and produce and publish a strategy based on the results. Therefore this document contains the information that has underpinned the proposed Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2021.

### Key findings:

- There was a steady rise in homelessness applications from 2014 to 2016, but a substantial increase in the number of homelessness applications from 2017.
- There has been a sizable increase in the amount of homelessness applications since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which placed a renewed focus on homelessness prevention and introduced a range of new duties which came into force in April 2018.
- In the last 3 years the most common cause of statutory homelessness is that family or friends can no longer accommodate the individual or household.
- The main priority need group has consistently been single parent households.
- The 25-44 age group makes up the largest cohort accepted as statutory homeless between 2013 and 2019. In 2018/19 there was an increase of 3x the previous year.
- The private rented sector is not an affordable option for households on low incomes as the gap between local housing allowance and the average price of a rented property is too great.
- The rise of homelessness presentations has in turn increased the number of homelessness households accommodated in temporary accommodation provided by the Council. There has been a dramatic increase in the use of bed and breakfast as temporary accommodation for homeless households, putting strain on DDC resources.
- Rough sleeping is occurring in small numbers in the District, but figures are unrealistic as they only represent a snapshot in time. There is, potentially, more rough sleepers than the figures show that remain unseen.

# 1. Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on all local authorities to produce and publish a Homelessness Strategy that sets out how the local authority intends to apply measures that can help tackle and prevent homelessness. The strategy must be based on a review of homelessness within the local authority area.

The purpose of this Homelessness Review is to understand homelessness in the Daventry District by determining the levels and likely future trends of homelessness and also consider any gaps in services that are currently being provided. Therefore the purpose of this Homelessness Review is to:

- Look at the levels of homelessness and likely future levels of homelessness within the Daventry District area
- Identify current activities that are carried out for the purpose of preventing homelessness, securing accommodation for people in the district who are or may become homeless, and the provision of support to people who are or may become homeless
- Identify resources available to the Council and its partners (statutory and voluntary) to carry out these activities i.e. prevent homelessness, provide accommodation and support those suffering homelessness or are at risk of homelessness

Daventry District Council's Homelessness Strategy currently sits within its Strategic Housing Plan 2014-2019 and forms a suite of housing related strategies along with the Housing and Empty Homes strategies. This review looks at data from 2013 to 2019 in order to be able to reflect on past trends as well as providing a closer focus on the current year due to recent legislative changes.

Following the enactment of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the statistical collection for local authorities has been shaped to include new statutory homelessness duties of prevention and relief. Therefore statistics have been included that relate to the new data collection post April 2018 where data has been recorded slightly differently and there is little comparison with previous years statistical results. The difference in the changes to the new data collection will allow the effects of the Homelessness reduction Act to be monitored.

This homelessness review will highlight the gaps in homelessness provision in Daventry District and will form the basis for the objectives that we will set within the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.

## 1.1 Scope of review

This Homelessness Review seeks to understand homelessness in Daventry District by looking at a variety of elements that continue to have an impact on the increased demand for homelessness services that has been seen nationally and locally.

The reviews findings, along with input from stakeholders and other local partners through a pre-engagement consultation survey followed by a consultation process, will help to inform the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2021.

Pre-engagement activity provides the Council with the opportunity to engage all relevant partners in developing its Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy. Any comments from this will be considered and changes made to the draft Strategy before carrying out the consultation process.

Consultation on the draft Strategy will run for four weeks, responses will be collected and considered before the final version of the strategy is produced and adopted.

## 1.2 Existing Strategy

Daventry District Council's existing Homelessness Strategy is contained within its Strategic Housing Plan (2014-2019); this incorporates its Housing Strategy, Empty Homes Strategy and Homelessness Review and Strategy. The Plan identified a number of objectives; one of these, specifically related to homelessness was the provision of suitable housing for vulnerable people and sets out the actions in order to achieve this aim. The following details what we have achieved in line with the actions from the 2014-2019 Plan:

- Procured and implemented an IT system specifically for the purpose of managing and recording the operation of functions under new Homelessness legislation.
- Developed close links with partners that can assist with programs of support and rehabilitation.
- Facilitated communications to promote a commitment to refer.
- Accessed funding from partners in order to assist vulnerable households.
- Created drop-in sessions at the children's centre and a local primary school.
- Encouraged all partner agencies to sign up to an online homeless referral system.
- Developed stronger links with letting agents and private landlords through participation in DDC landlord forums to raise public awareness and developed schemes and incentives such as DDC's Private Sector Leasing Scheme.
- Identified and put forward bids for funding.
- Expanded DDC's temporary accommodation provision.
- Periodically monitored the levels of rough sleeping within the District.
- Periodically reviewed the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP).
- Continued to carry out information gathering in order to determine specialist need.
- Attended weekly hospital discharge meetings at a specialist hospital accommodation.

- Mapped and documented homelessness and support services.

## 2. Housing market analysis – need and affordability

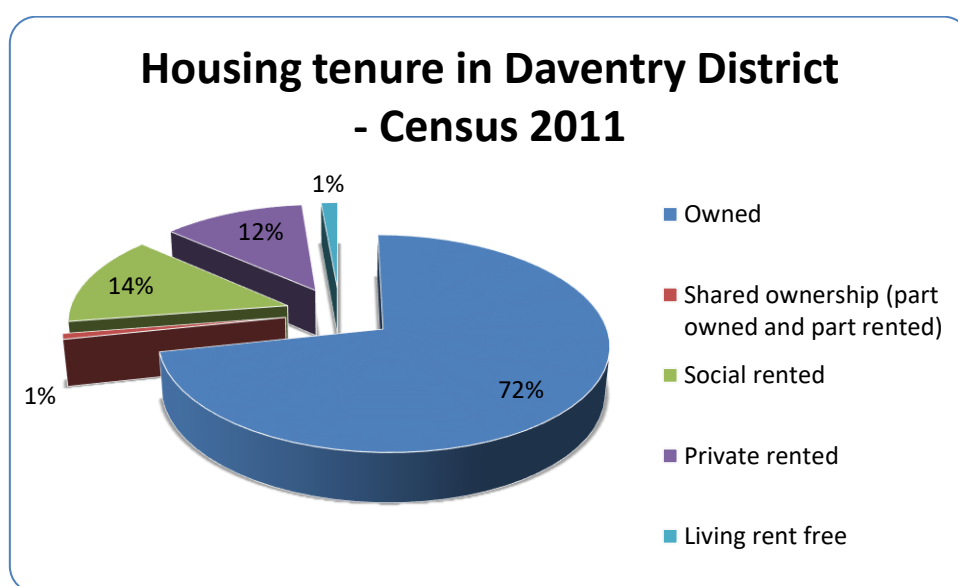
The following section provides the wider housing context.

### 2.1 Local Housing Stock

According to local Council Tax information there are currently 36,835 homes in the district which is an increase of over 4,000 since the 2011 Census (Census data based on household spaces).

The tenure structure shows that the proportion of owner occupiers is far greater than any other tenure with nearly three quarters of houses in the District being either owned outright or with a mortgage. 14% are social rented and 12% are privately rented.

Figure 1:



Information sourced from: Census 2011

### 2.2 Housing requirement

The overall housing requirement 2011 -2026 is detailed within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (Technical Note October 2013) and totals 7,000 with the split of 61% market and 39% affordable housing.

Based on detailed analysis of past trends and current estimates of households considered to be in housing need, the West Northants Joint Planning Unit Housing Market Evidence 2017 produced by Opinion Research Services concluded that there was 585 households in need of affordable housing in the Daventry District. 192 of these households are already in affordable housing however it is unsuitable for them, therefore the net need was 393 at the researches base date (2016).

The table below provides the total need for market and affordable housing for Daventry District.

Table 1 – Need for market and affordable housing		Housing Need (households)		Overall Housing Need
		Market housing	Affordable housing	
Unmet need for affordable housing (2016)	Total unmet need for affordable housing	-	585	585
	Supply of housing vacated	290	192	482
Overall impact of current affordable housing need		290	393	103
Projected future housing need 2016-29	Newly forming households	5,518	2,005	7,523
	Household dissolutions following death	6,074	1,410	7,484
Net household growth within West Northamptonshire		-557	596	39
Impact of existing households falling into need		-1,237	1,237	-
Impact of existing households climbing out of need		1,656	-1,656	-
Impact of households migrating to/from the area		3,501	866	4,368
Future need for market and affordable housing 2016-29				
Total need for market and affordable housing	Overall impact of current affordable housing need	-290	393	103
	Future need for market and affordable housing 2016-29	3,364	1,042	4,407
Total need for market and affordable housing		3,074	1,435	4,510
Average annual need for housing		236	110	347
<b>Proportion of overall need for market and affordable housing</b>		<b>68.17%</b>	<b>31.83%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Information sourced from: West Northamptonshire Housing Market Evidence 2017, ORS (ORS housing model used)

## 2.3 Housing requirement: Housing register

Daventry District Council holds no social housing stock but operates a housing register under its Housing Allocations Scheme. The scheme sets out who is able to apply (who is eligible) and the way the Council determines priorities for allocating housing. The scheme ensures that social housing is allocated to the people who need it the most.

Table 2, below, shows the number of applicants on the housing register for the last six financial years.

Table 2 - Number of applicants on the Housing Register 2013-2019:

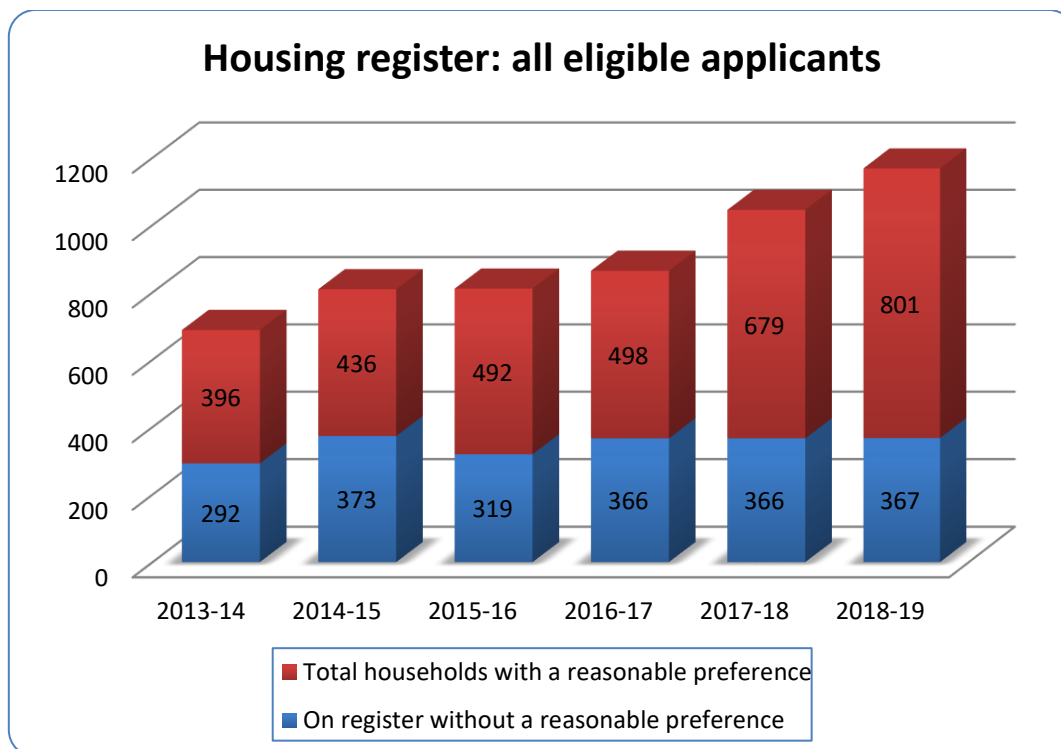
Date	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Applicants	688	809	811	864	1045	1168

Information sourced from: DDC, Local authority statistics

The allocations scheme determines the priorities for social housing and must ensure that reasonable preference is given to certain categories of people including those whom are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, which includes those that are intentionally homeless and those not in priority need, as well as those whom are owed a duty under homelessness.

Chart 2, below, shows the gradual increase in the total of general housing applications from 2013 to March 2019, with those applications that have a priority (all reasonable preference categories including homelessness) more than doubling in the six year period.

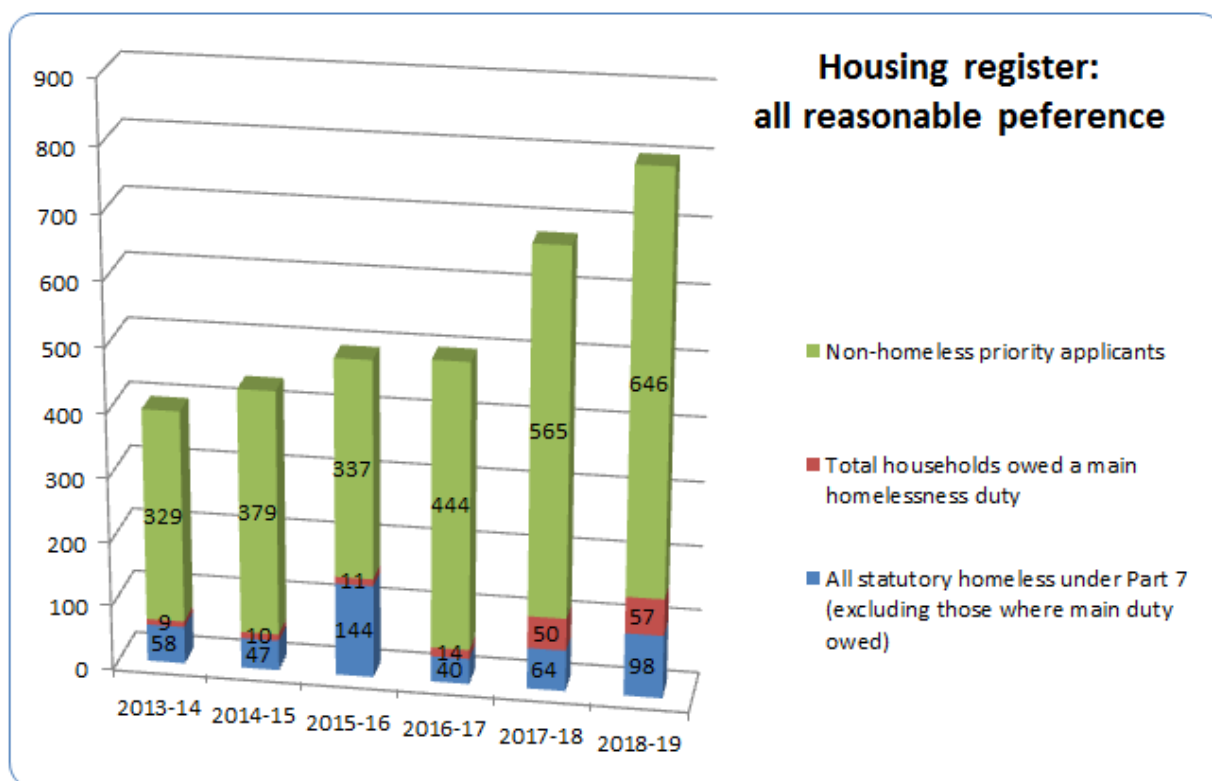
Figure 2:



Information sourced from: DDC, Local authority statistics

Figure 3 below shows the total number of eligible applicants that have been assessed as having a reasonable preference in accordance with the Allocation Scheme and how many have been accepted as being owed a main homelessness duty.

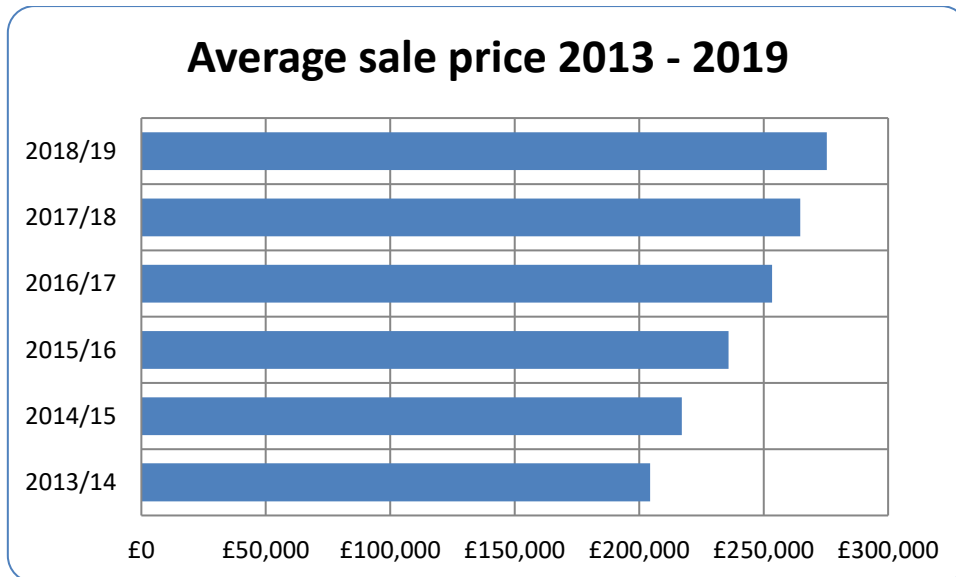
Figure 3:



## 2.4 House prices, rent levels and local incomes

Daventry District has seen a steady rise in average sold house prices over the last 6 years as shown below. The largest increase, of 9%, occurred between the financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16.

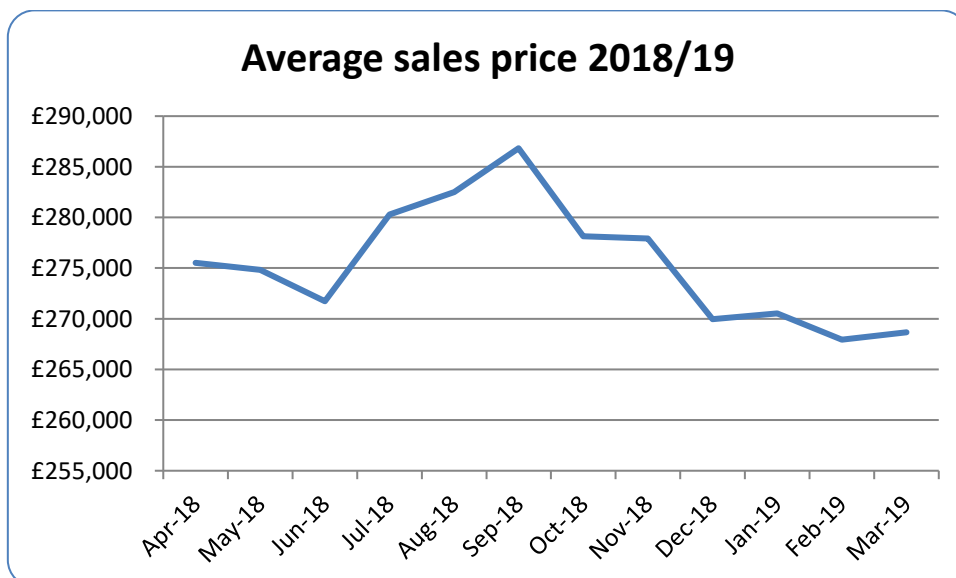
Figure 4:



Information sourced from: UK House Price Index, Landregistry

Despite the steady increase in price year on year as the above averages show, the last financial year (2018-2019) saw a decrease in average prices between April 2018 and March 2019. ONS has recorded the fall for this year as a national trend.

Figure 5:



Information sourced from: UK House Price Index, landregistry



Office of National Statistic (ONS) house price to workplace-based earnings data, based on the ratio of median house prices to median gross annual workplace-based earnings, illustrates that house prices in Daventry District are ten times higher than incomes.

Table 3 - Ratio of median house prices to median gross annual earnings

<b>Year</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Ratio</b>	7.82	7.99	10.29	10.22	10.27

Information sourced from: Officer for National Statistics House to workplace-based earnings ratio

## 2.5 Availability of the Private Rented Sector housing

Although ever increasing in age, the 2011 Census data pulls together the most comprehensive local area statistics and provides the latest complete picture of housing tenures in the Daventry District. Social rented made up almost 14% of the population and privately rented 12%. Whilst the percentage of owner occupation and social rented decreased from the 2001 Census, the figures of privately renting more than doubled.

It is reported on a national level that the private rented sector has overtaken the social rented sector, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reports that younger households are more likely to rent privately, with the 25 to 34 years age group representing the largest group of private renters.

Low income households in receipt of benefits are less likely to be able to afford to live in a private rental property due to how much benefit they are entitled to which is worked out using Local Housing Allowance (LHA). This is especially true of those single under 35 years old who are only entitled to a room rate. LHA was introduced in 2008 and set a maximum figure that housing benefit can cover for those living in privately rented accommodation to bring it in line with payments for social housing. Following changes brought in by the Welfare Reform Act (2012) LHA rates were frozen which means that as rent prices rise, there will be a greater gap between payments in benefits and rent charged.

Currently, tenants facing hardship following the introduction of the welfare related reforms, rely on Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) from the Council, however, DHP is supposed to be short term and the funds are limited. The Council has made 1406 payments from its discretionary housing payment fund (DHPF), totalling £391,245 from 2013/14 up to and including the 2017-18 financial year. 79% of the payments made were due to new rules on under-occupation.

Daventry District covers five broad Rental Market Areas and a different level of Local Housing Allowance is applicable to each of these areas. The town of Daventry is covered under Rugby East with the rest of the district as shown below.

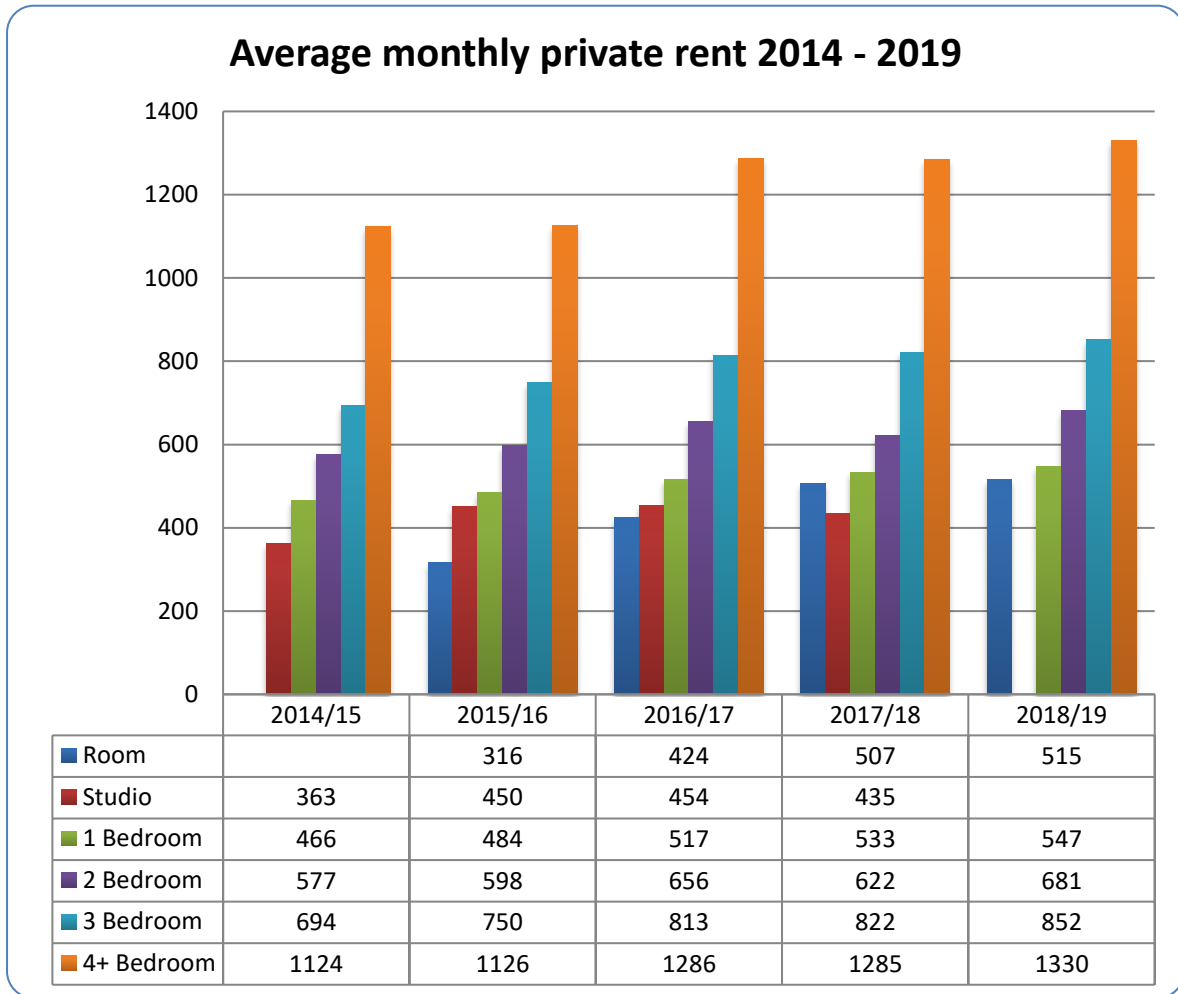
Table 4 - Local Housing Allowance as at 2019

Property type	Rugby East	Northants Central	Northampton	Cherwell Valley	Leicester
Room	65.90	55.42	68.31	73.53	63.22
1 Bedroom	97.66	87.42	106.14	133.96	86.30
2 Bedroom	123.62	112.39	134.00	162.29	109.32
3 Bedroom	142.18	131.11	144.04	193.51	130.38
4 Bedroom	194.10	169.73	192.75	248.35	163.16

Information sourced from: Valuation Office Agency

Figure 6 below shows that the average monthly cost of private rentals has gradually increased between April 2014 and March 2019, the largest increase was between 2015/16 and 2016/17 where the average rent for a room went up by 34%, the next highest increase was recorded at 24% for a studio property between 2014/15 and 2015/16. Most recent comparable figures (2017/18 – 2018/19) have seen only a very slight increase in the amount of rent charged for all property sizes compared with previous years, the largest being for two bedroom properties at 9%, the rest were between a 2-4% increase.

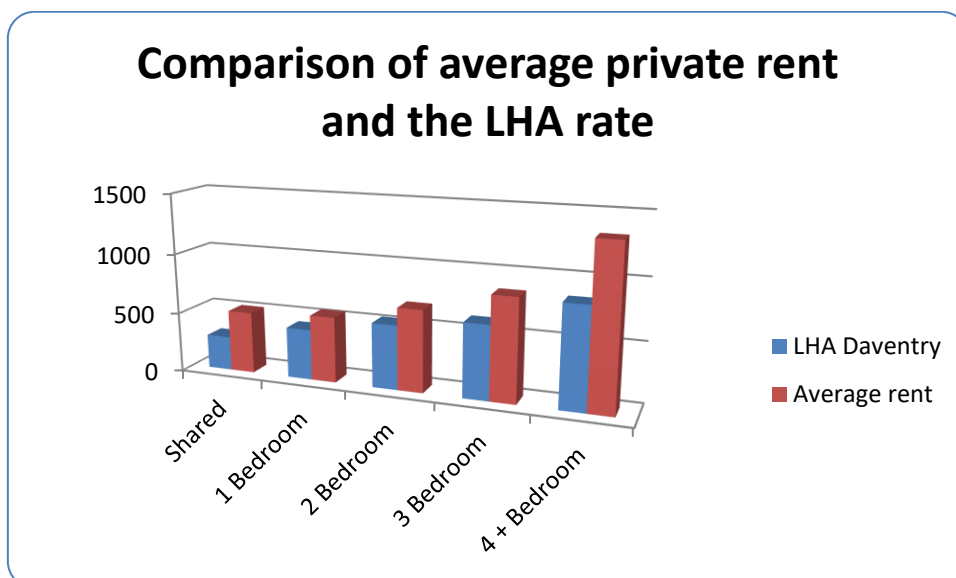
Figure 6:



Information sourced from: Private rental market summary statistics, Gov.uk

The below graph compares the most recent average private rent figure from the chart above with that of a monthly amount of benefits based on the Local Housing Allowance. The data is based on the LHA rate for Rugby East. This shows that there is a large shortfall should the household be in receipt of benefits.

Figure 7:



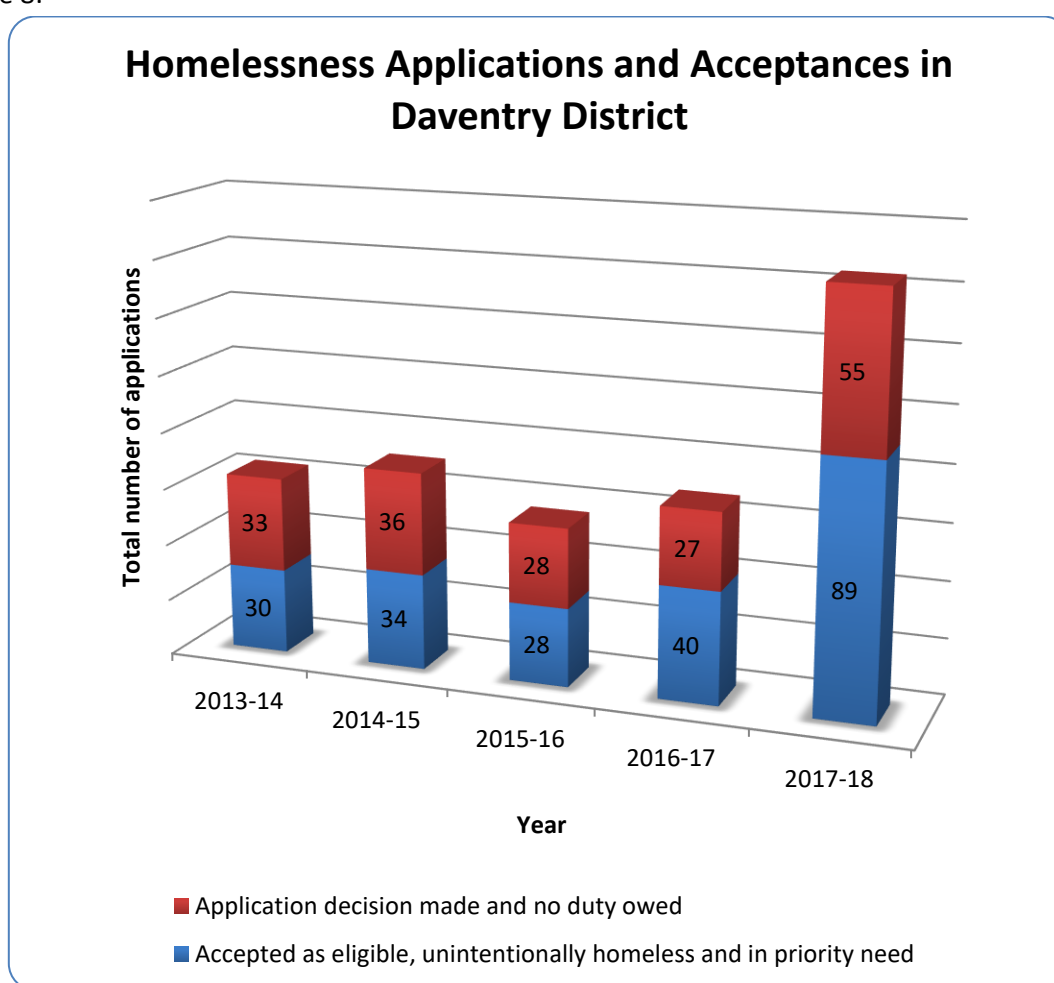
### 3. Levels of Homelessness

The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is responsible for compiling statutory returns submitted quarterly by local authorities. These returns contain data on statutory homelessness, rough sleeping and homelessness prevention and relief.

Table 5 – Number of homeless applications and acceptances

Year	Homelessness applications	Number of acceptances	Percentage of acceptances
2013-14	63	30	48%
2014-15	70	34	49%
2015-16	56	28	50%
2016-17	67	40	60%
2017-18	144	89	62%

Figure 8:



Information sourced from: Live Tables - Local Authority Level Homelessness figures, Gov.uk

### 3.1 Homelessness Prevention and Relief

Homelessness outcomes have been recorded as shown in table 6 below. This identifies where the Council has successfully taken action which has led to positive results in addressing the households' homelessness matter between 2013 to 2018. The data in this table refers to the period prior to the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Table 6 – Homelessness outcomes of prevention or relief

Successful Prevention	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Able to remain in existing home	-	6	7	8	5
Assisted to obtain alternative accommodation	-	4	6	5	1
<b>Total Successful Relief</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Total Prevention and relief</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>26</b>

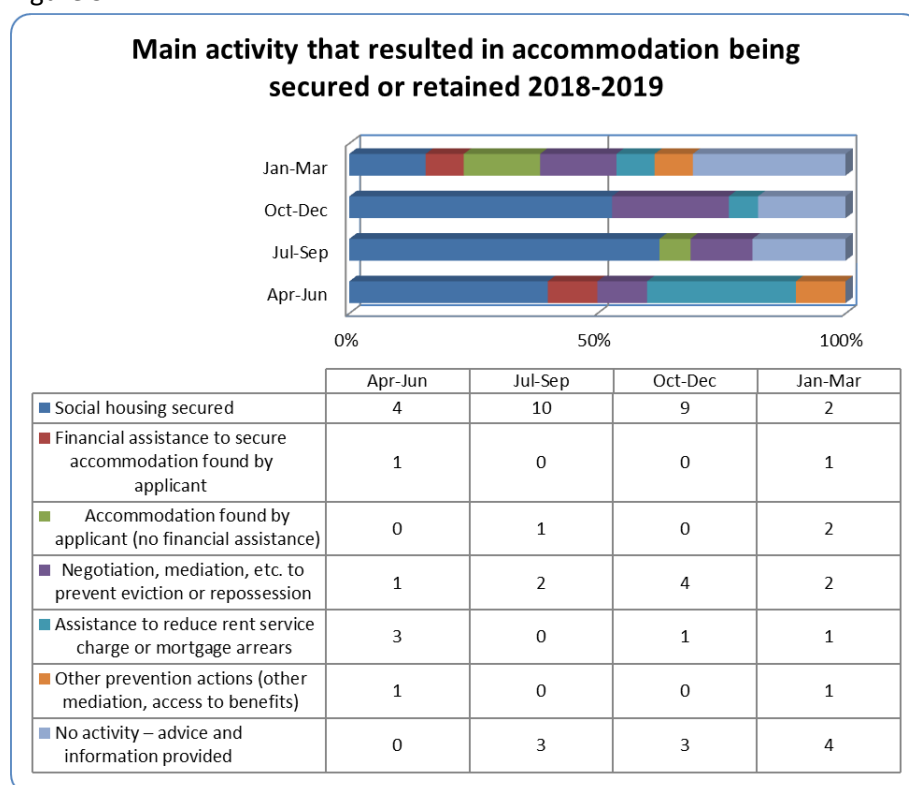
Information sourced from: Live Tables – Total reported cases of homelessness prevention and relief, Gov.uk

The Council works hard to try and prevent or relieve homelessness. Prevention and relief has now become an integral part of homelessness legislation through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which accords duties under these titles.

During the first year of the Homelessness Reduction Act (1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019), DDC has recorded that they have seen 827 households seek homelessness advice from the Council.

From April 2018, as part of new duties, the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) made it necessary for authorities to carry out a more detailed assessment of homelessness and produce a personalised housing plan. The plan aims to help a household by providing reasonable steps the applicant and the Council need to take to prevent or relieve homelessness. Figure 9 below shows the types of activity that has been carried out each quarter in the Acts first active year. The majority of prevention and relief activities have been households securing housing through DDC's housing register.

Figure 9:



Regretably it is not possible to successfully assist all households in preventing or relieving homelessness; in these circumstances it is necessary to determine if we owe the household a ‘main’ homelessness duty in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). This involves an assessment of if the household is eligible for assistance, are homeless or threatened with homelessness, they have a priority need, are not intentionally homeless, and have a local connection to the Daventry District.

Of all the decisions between the financial years 2013 to 2018 (prior to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017), an average of 55% of applications were accepted with other decisions as outlined in table 7 below.

Table 7 – All homelessness decisions 2013 to 2018

Year	Main duty Accepted	Not Homeless	Not in Priority Need	Intentionally Homeless	Total Applications
2013/14	30	7	5	21	63
2014/15	34	10	6	20	70
2015/16	28	-	-	17	56
2016/17	40	-	-	17	67
2017/18	89	18	17	20	144

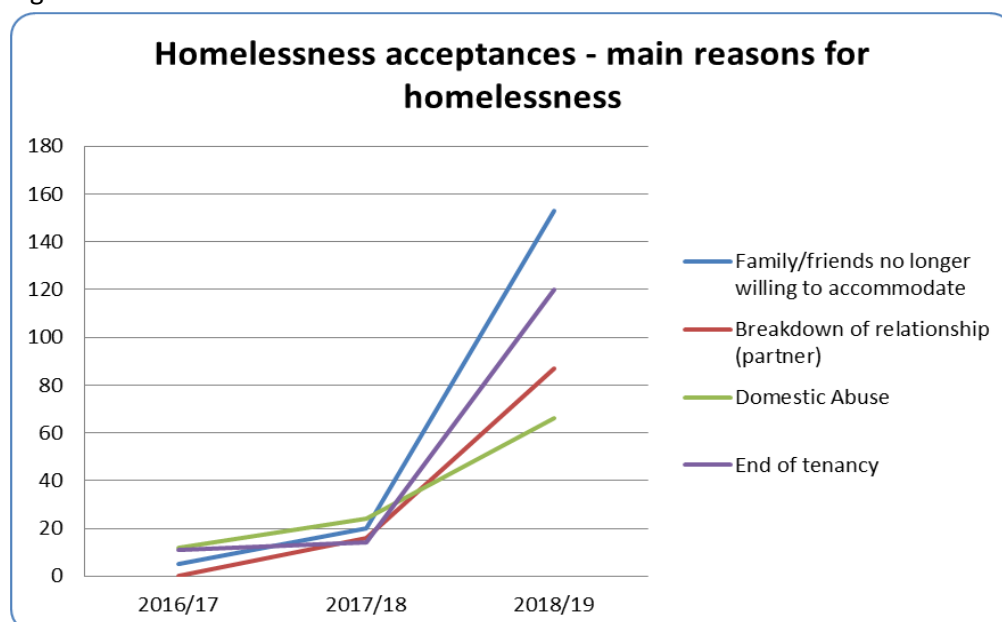
Information sourced from: Live Tables - Local Authority action under homelessness provisions, Gov.uk

### 3.2 Main causes for statutory homelessness

The main causes for statutory homelessness over the last three years are detailed below, these figures do not reflect the total amount of acceptances but rather show the main reasons in order to provide direction of where the demand for assistance is expected.

The most common cause over this period varies, however it is clear that most recently the cause has been that friends or family were no longer willing to accommodate the household within their property this includes households or individuals that have no fixed abode or are “sofa surfing”. The second most common cause are tenancies that are ending and the landlord is no longer willing to accommodate for whatever reason e.g. the tenancy is not being renewed, property being sold.

Figure 10:



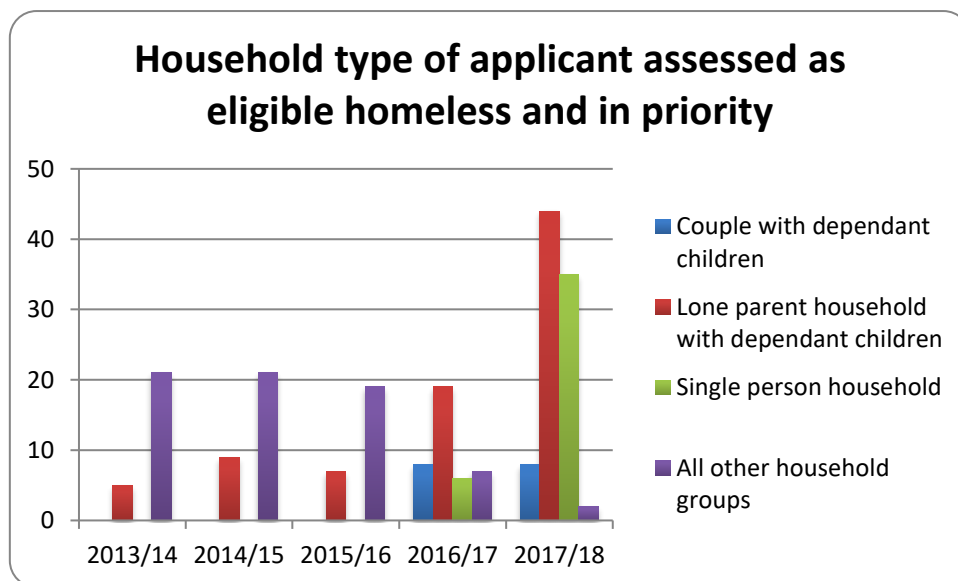
Information sourced from: Live Tables, Gov.UK and DDC homelessness data

### 3.3 Household Characteristics

If a housing authority is unable to prevent or relieve homelessness it is required to reach a decision as to whether the applicant has a priority need for accommodation. Statutory homelessness is determined on priority need, therefore an authority needs to be satisfied that the household applying as homeless has a priority under the definition contained within the Housing Act (1996).

Out of the eligible and priority need cases between 2013 and 2018 the main household types are shown in figure 11 below. The figures are important to consider when determining trends of households that have presented as homeless, this can then help the Council to identify what resources are required in meeting the needs of these households.

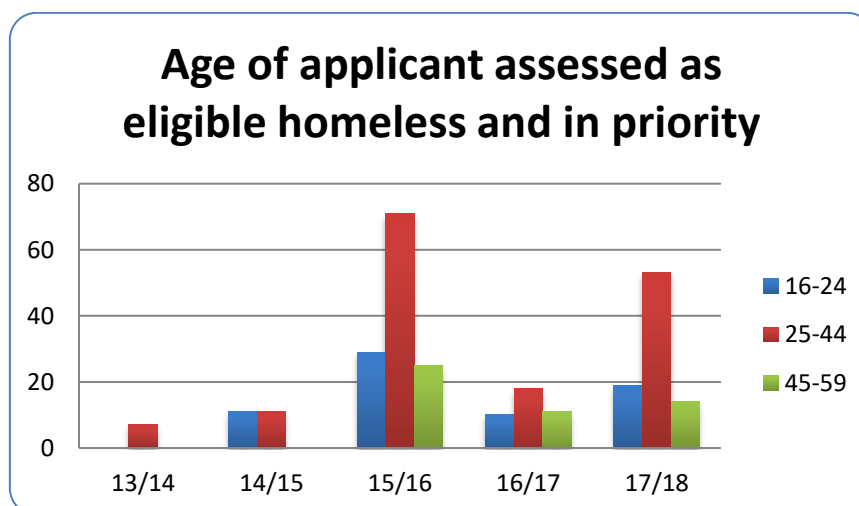
Figure 11:



Information sourced from: Live Tables - Local Authority Level Homelessness figures, Gov.uk

Each year the main age range accepted as statutory homeless has been between the ages of 25 and 44. This group saw a decrease in applications from 15/16 to 16/17 however the other age groups also experienced a drop. The amount of 25 – 44 year olds increased drastically during 17/18 whereas the other groups saw much less of an increase.

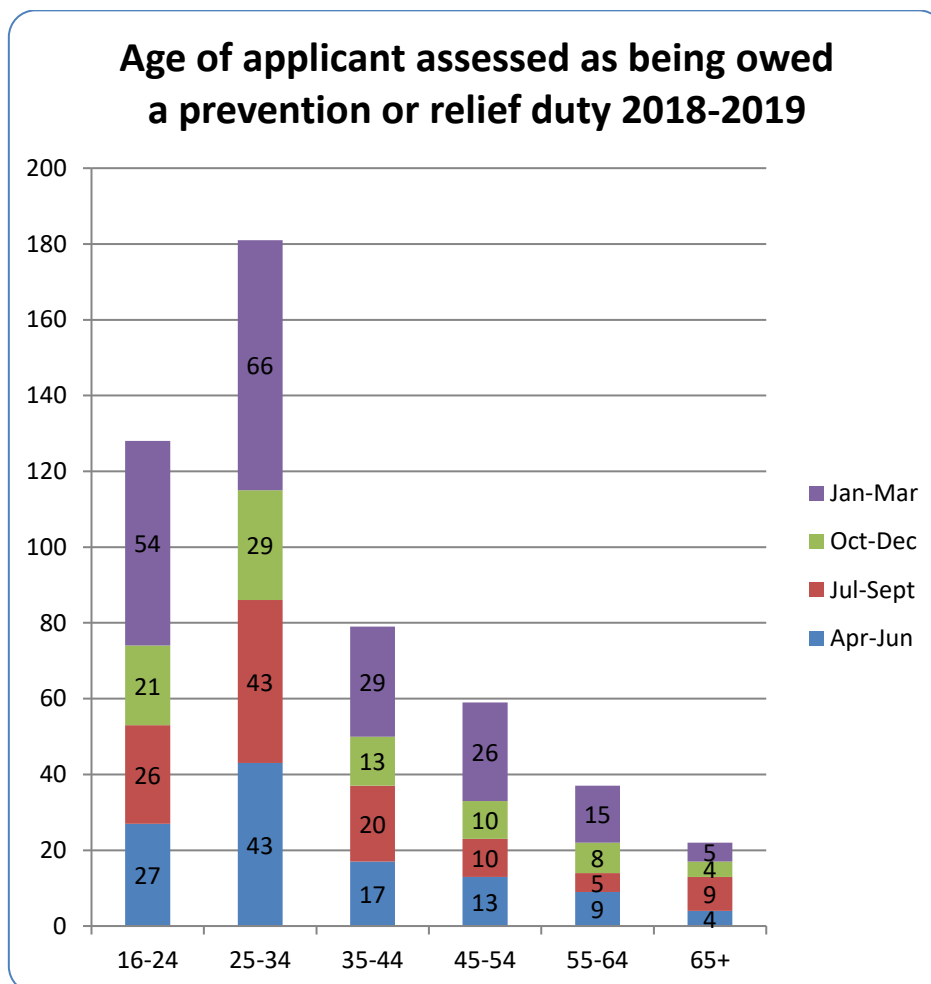
Figure 12:



Information sourced from: Live Tables - Local Authority Level Homelessness figures, Gov.uk

Recordings of early 2018-2019 data show that the majority of applicants that are owed a homelessness prevention or relief duty are recorded within the same age bracket however the new way of recording narrows the range and shows that those aged 35-44 are the majority age group followed by 25-34 year olds therefore still showing that the majority of applicants that are owed these duties are still within the 25-44 age bracket.

Figure 13:





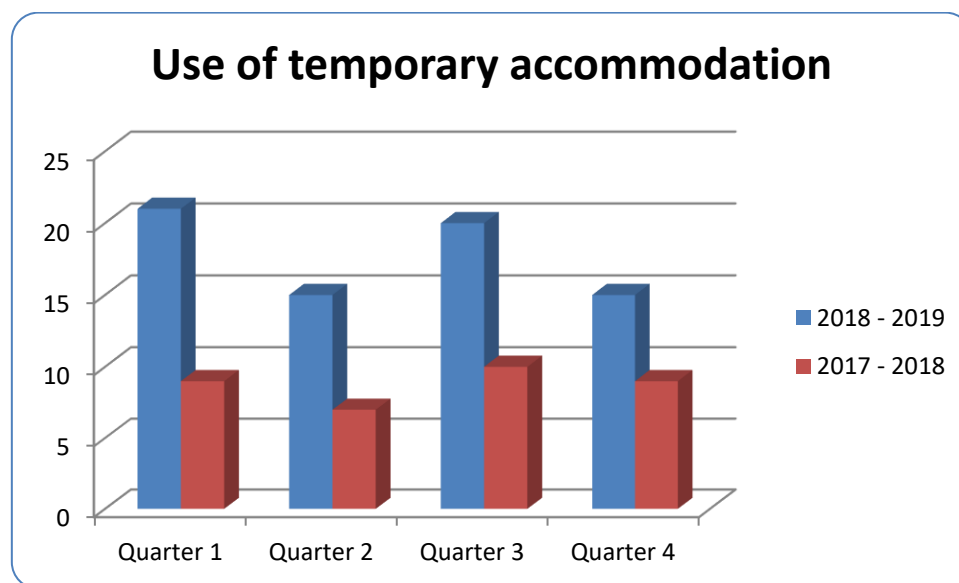
## 4. Temporary Accommodation

Temporary accommodation is used as an interim solution for households that are statutorily homeless until a point that suitable and permanent accommodation becomes available. Temporary accommodation includes temporary provision that the Council owns and bed and breakfast accommodation.

The below shows the use of temporary accommodation for the last two years and represents a snapshot of numbers in accommodation on the last day of the quarter and does therefore not reflect the total numbers in accommodation.

It should also be noted that those accommodated under DDCs Severe Weather Protocol (see section 5) will not be included in these figures unless they have been willing to go through the homelessness procedure.

Figure 14:



Information sourced from: Live Tables - Local Authority Level Homelessness figures, Gov.uk

There is an obvious increase in the number of households placed in temporary accommodation. The periods between April and June and October to December showing the greatest figures for 2018 - 2019.

Figure 15 shows of those accommodated in temporary, how many have been placed in B&B for 2018-2019.

Figure 15:

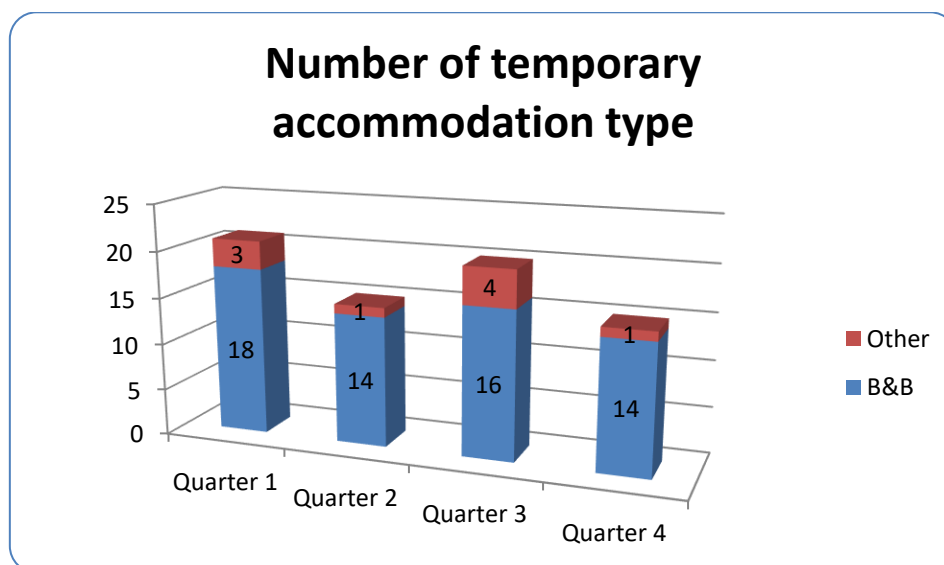
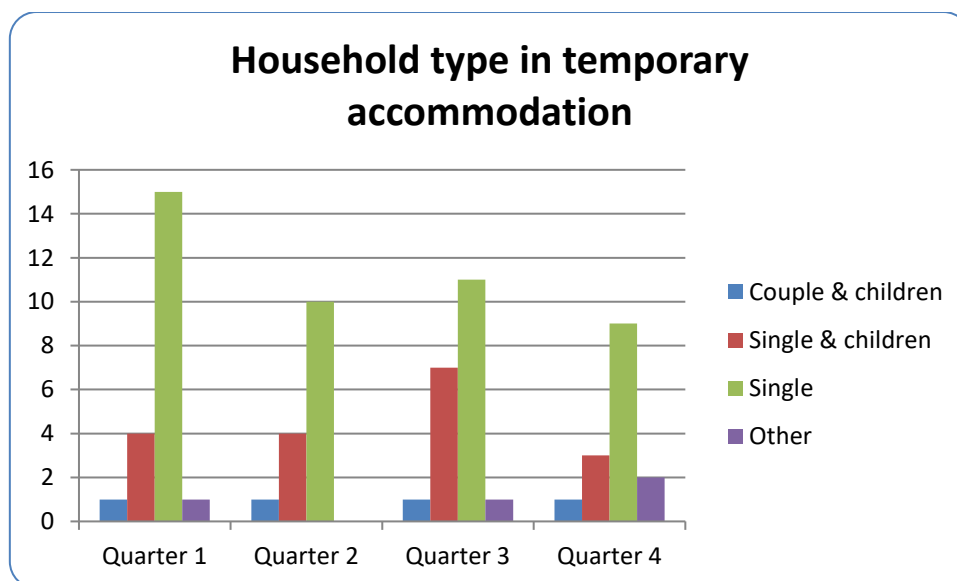


Figure 16 shows the household type accommodated in temporary for 2018 – 2019, figures are taken from the end of the quarter.

Figure 16:



Information sourced from: Live Tables - Local Authority Level Homelessness figures, Gov.uk

At the end of each quarter in 2018/19 there were more single people accommodated in bed and breakfast temporary accommodation than there was any other household type.

## 5. Rough Sleeping

Daventry District’s estimated Rough Sleepers count, which is produced by MHCLG and informed by a spotlight street count between the beginning of October and the end of November each year is shown in table 8 below.

Table 8 – Spotlight street count 2014 to 2018

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	1	1	4	2	3

Information sourced from: Rough Sleeping Statistics, Gov.uk

This shows that the number of people sleeping rough has increased in the past year by one person, with most being male and over 26 years of age. It should be noted that this does not capture the full extent of rough sleeping as the majority of data is based on an estimate, and is a snapshot in time, and there may be rough sleepers that are concealed from public view and therefore are unaccounted for.

Daventry districts record of people accommodated under its Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) suggests that the above street count is an underestimate . SWEP operates when overnight temperatures are predicted to fall below freezing for at least 3 consecutive nights in order to assist those sleeping rough to avoid risk to health. It also assists the Council to engage with those that would otherwise not approach it. The table below provides the number of people accommodated through SWEP each year from 2014:

Table 9 – Accommodated under SWEP 2014 to 2018

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	3	0	0	9	4

Comparison of the two shows the difference, and therefore highlights the inaccuracies in recording this sort of information.

Figure 17:

