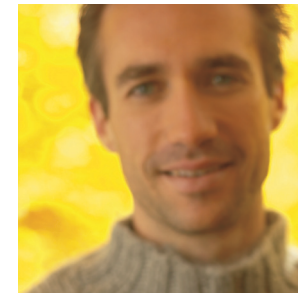
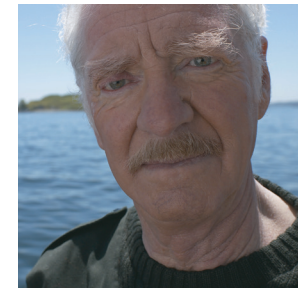
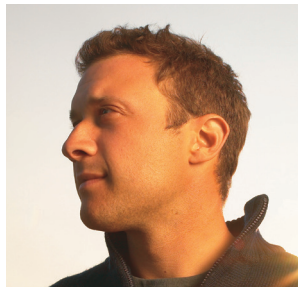


# Homelessness Review Summary 2019



**WARRINGTON**  
Borough Council

# 1 Foreword

Tackling and preventing homelessness remains a top priority for Warrington Borough Council and a key challenge for the Council and our partners. The homelessness review will be used to inform the development of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 to 2025. The review will shape the development of the strategy by identifying future trends, key issues and gaps in service provision. It will also consider the challenges arising from the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and our experience in meeting the new duties arising from the Act.

The information is based on the Council's records and those published by the Government. However, we intend to carry out workshops and engagement events to obtain a wider view of homelessness and the challenges that we face.

Warrington's housing market is characterised by high demand, a successful economy and a growing population. This demand outstrips the supply of housing leading to higher house prices and rents. Those least able to compete can often find their options limited. This is exacerbated by the low level of Local Housing Allowance for Warrington residents and by welfare reforms – both of which fall outside of the Council's control. These have reduced access to the private rented sector for those on low incomes. Alongside this we have witnessed a year on year reduction in the availability of social housing. Whilst a key priority, the delivery of new homes lags behind our aspirations, with social housing unable to meet demand. Over decades we have seen an insufficient supply of new homes and our 5 year plan cannot match the scale of this backlog of housing need.

On a slightly more positive side, this review demonstrates that we have been successful in the prevention and relief of homelessness, with prevention work reducing the number of households who would have become homeless without intervention.

We have recognised the problem of rough sleeping and have identified actions to reduce it. Two successful grant funding bids under the Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative will assist in piloting the Somewhere Safe to Stay hub and provide specialist support for 21 people with complex needs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the review and encourage you to participate in the coming workshops and engagement events.



**Councillor Maureen McLaughlin**  
Cabinet Board Member  
Housing, Public Health and Wellbeing

## 2 Definition of Homelessness

The common perception of homelessness is a single person seen sleeping rough on the streets. However, homelessness is a more complex issue affecting families, couples and single people. Not all homeless people live on the streets they may have access to unsettled accommodation by “sofa surfing” or living in overcrowded accommodation with families or friends.

This review uses a wide definition of homelessness which includes the following:

- People sleeping rough
- Single homeless people living in shelters, hostels and supported accommodation
- Statutory homeless

It also includes people that can be described as “hidden homelessness”. These are people who are squatting, living in severely overcrowded accommodation and concealed households.

The government has set out in legislation who can be considered as being homeless or threatened with homeless and provided guidance on how the Council assesses this. People who present as homeless don't have to be sleeping on the streets or not have a roof over their head at the time they apply for help.

People are statutory homeless if:

- unreasonable to remain because the property is in a poor or unsafe condition
- No longer able to afford the accommodation
- Lives in a caravan or boat with nowhere to legally put it

## 3 Key Findings

The review identified that with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) there are more statutory duties so more people qualify for assistance. The largest increase has been with single people.

Warrington has a successful local economy which as a popular place to live and work increases the demand for housing which outstrips the ability of the market to meet. This leads to higher house prices and private sector rents. For those on low paid jobs and welfare benefits private sector rents are generally higher than the benefit levels that can be paid under the local housing allowance. The availability of social housing is reducing year on year which limits the options available for those on low incomes and welfare benefits.

## 4 Overview and Profile of Homelessness

An analysis of the data available for 2018/19 identified the following:

### Applications

- 3,239 total applications made to Housing Plus
- 1,389 applications owed a prevention or relief duty
- 62% (745) single people
- 22% (269) single female parents applicants with dependent children
- 66% of all applicants declared that they needed support

### Main Causes of Homelessness

- 26% family and friends no longer able to accommodate
- 14% loss of private rented sector accommodation
- 14% domestic abuse
- 12% non-violent relationship breakdown

### Prevention and Relief Duty

The focus of the HRA is the prevention or relief of homelessness and the table below shows that we have been successful in achieving this. In 2017/18 we achieved 508 preventions/relief whilst in 2018/19 this has increased to 1,389.

	P1E Data 2016/17	P1E Data 2017/18	H-CLIK 2018/19
Preventions	585	454	688
Reliefs	59	54	701
<b>Total</b>	<b>644</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>1,389</b>

### Main Homelessness Duty

It is important to note that the government has established a new process to collate the statistics which are still under development. The figures below for 2018/19 do not include the final quarter (January to March 2019) because they have not been published by the government.

Previously the full housing duty acceptance homeless trend has been upwards increasing from 219 in 2016/17 to 267 in 2017/18. However, due to an increase in prevention and relief this has reduced to 31.

	P1E Data 2016/17	P1E Data 2017/18	H-CLIK 2018/19
Total Statutory Homeless decisions made	384	418	60
Of which the outcome was as follows:			
Full Housing Duty Accepted	219	267	31
Found intentionally homeless	50	64	14
Found not to meet priority need criteria	45	30	13
Found not to be homeless	65	50	2
Found not eligible for assistance	5	7	0

### Duty to Refer

The HRA placed a statutory duty on public bodies to make referrals to the Council where they have clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The total number of referrals from 1st October 2018 to 31st March 2019 was 277.

# 5 Demand and Supply for Social Housing

## Under One Roof

On 15th March 2018 Chooseahome was replaced with Under One Roof. Instead of having to bid for any vacancy applicants are matched by priority to properties in the areas they have selected to live.

The number of live applications as at September 2019 was 4,334 which is an increase from 2,629 in September 2018 and is as follows:

	Total
July 2018	2,486
February 2019	3,482
May 2019	3,811
Sept 2019	4,334

Source: Torus Under One Roof

Breakdown by Group	Number
Families	1,929
Single and Couples	2,405
Total	4,334

Source: Torus Under One Roof

There are 685 applicants registered who need larger accommodation some of whom may be at risk of homelessness.

## Social Housing

Golden Gates Housing Trust is the largest social landlord in Warrington and we have seen a year on year reduction in the availability of social housing.

2002/03	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
1,311	851	809	688	639	486

Source: GGHT Statistics

An analysis of the reasons for ending a GGHT tenancy shows that the main reason was due to death at 20%, 9% transfers and 8% abandoning the property whilst evictions due to rent arrears accounted for 4%.

## 6 Rough Sleeping

Nationally the number of people sleeping rough in England has risen each year since 2010 except for last year. The Council's investment of £1.5m to launch New Start in June 2017 made an impact on the number of rough sleepers which reduced against national and local trends in 2017. Regrettably, the Council has finite resources so was unable to provide a similar level of investment so this only delayed the increase in rough sleeping.

The table below shows the estimated number of rough sleepers over the last few years.

Year	Number
2010	7
2011	11
2012	7
2013	11
2014	5
2015	5
2016	5
2017	4
2018	21

## 7 Overview of Funding

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017: New Burden Funding

The government provided additional funding to meet the additional statutory duties arising from the introduction of the HRA.

Warrington received the following additional grant funding:

2017/18	£30,246
2018/19	£27,706
2019/20	£35,705

### Flexible Homelessness Support Grant

The Temporary Accommodation Management Fee (TAMF) was distributed to local authorities by the Department for Work and Pensions until the end of March 2017. The TAMF was replaced by the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant which was as follows:

2017/18	£241,976
2018/19	£269,384
2019/20	£317,357

### Rough Sleeping Strategy

The government has provided grant funding of £100m under the Rough Sleeping Strategy. The Council, working in partnership with Forum Housing Association, has been successful in a bid for government funding of £137,000. This provides specialist support for 21 residents and in response to consultation has enabled the Council to launch its first women only accommodation based project in Warrington.

A second bid has also been successful in securing a one off additional grant of £260,000 to pilot Somewhere Safe to Stay hub. This project aims to deliver a rapid assessment and support to people who are already or at risk of sleeping rough.

### **Cold Weather Fund**

The government is making available £10m grant funding for local authorities between September 2019 and March 2020 to reduce the number rough sleeping during winter.

There will also be £1m available to providers and services which are not commissioned by local authorities. This will be administered by Homeless Link to ensure that interventions are effective in supporting as many people as possible off the streets.

### **Homes England**

There are a number of grant funding programmes delivered by Homes England. In April 2016 bidding opened for the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes programme 2016 to 2021 with £1.4 billion available nationally.

In addition there is £44m capital and £6m revenue available under the Move On fund. This aims to free up hostel and refuge spaces by increasing the availability of affordable move on or second stage housing for rough sleepers, those in hostel accommodation and victims of domestic abuse. The funding has to be spent by March 2021.