



Homelessness Review

Homelessness Strategy 2017-2021

Contents

Introduction	3
Reigate and Banstead: Borough profile	3
Population	3
Employment	3
Deprivation	3
Tenure and Housing Costs	4
New Housing Delivery	5
Affordable housing	7
Rents	8
Homeless applications	9
Homeless and ethnicity	10
Homelessness and age	11
Homelessness and household types	12
Household type: gender breakdown	12
Causes of homelessness	13
Mortgage repossession	14
Homelessness and main priority categories	15
Homelessness prevention	16
Available tools to prevent homelessness	18
Housing Register	23
RBBC Temporary accommodation	26
Emergency accommodation	26

Introduction

Reviewing homelessness in the borough during the last 5 years and the issues which surround it allows the Council to identify and understand the trends in homelessness. Furthermore, it enables the Council to evaluate its services ensuring it meets the demands around homelessness, tenancy support and general housing advice.

Reigate and Banstead: Borough profile

Population

Reigate and Banstead is located in East Surrey bordering the boroughs of Croydon, Sutton, Crawley and the districts of Mole Valley and Tandridge. It has the highest population in Surrey of approximately 138,000 people. The population is expected to grow to 176,000 by 2037 as projected by the 2010 ONS. An increase to the over-65 population has also been predicted from the current proportion of 16% to 23% in 2035. At 85% the main ethnicity of the borough is White British, followed by 9.4% of non-white ethnic groups and 5.6% of all other white ethnicities. This is reflected in the statistics of homeless acceptances between 2011-2016, in which 82% have been of a white ethnicity.



Employment

Reigate and Banstead is the 3rd highest economically active local authority in Surrey. A total of 75.2% of the population aged 16-74 are economically active. The 80.7% of economically active males aged 16-74 exceed both the Surrey average of 79.7% and national average of 75.2%. Similarly, the 69.9% of economically active females aged between 16-74 also exceed the Surrey average of 67.7% and national average of 64.7%, ranking 2nd highest in the whole of Surrey (Census 2011). As of 2016 the borough had a Job Seekers Allowance claimant level of 0.6%, ranking 10th lowest out of the other 11 Surrey local authorities and 6.9% of the population aged 16-64 claim working age benefits.

Deprivation

As Reigate and Banstead is generally a thriving borough deprivation is not a significant issue. The borough falls just outside of the least 10% deprived in the country however within Surrey it is ranked as the 4th most deprived. Deprivation exists in pockets in the areas of Preston, Merstham, Redhill, Woodhatch and western areas of Horley. According to 2010 statistics released by the Department of Energy and Climate Change,



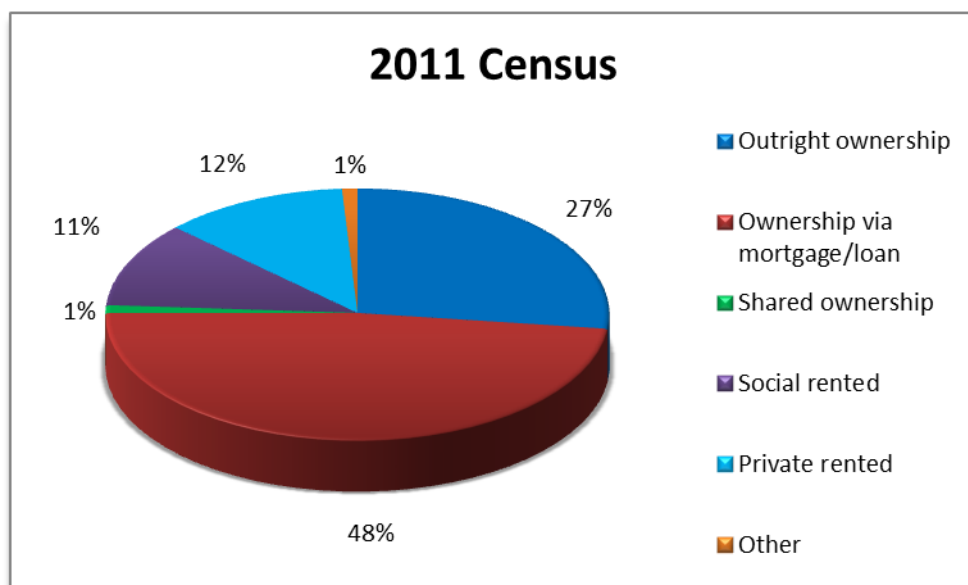
10.4% of households experience fuel poverty; however this is below the Surrey average of 10.6% and considerably lower than the national average of 18.4%.

Tenure and Housing Costs



Not only does this borough have over 55,400 households, the highest in Surrey, it also has the most properties of all the Surrey councils. Data collected in the 2011 Census states that there has been a 5% increase in private rented tenancies and a 6% decrease in outright home ownership.

The graph below illustrates that the majority of households in the borough own their homes through mortgages / loans followed by outright ownership. The divide between social housing renting and private sector renting is fairly balanced. In comparison to the national average, Reigate and Banstead has a higher proportion of home ownership and a lower proportion of both private sector and social rented accommodation.

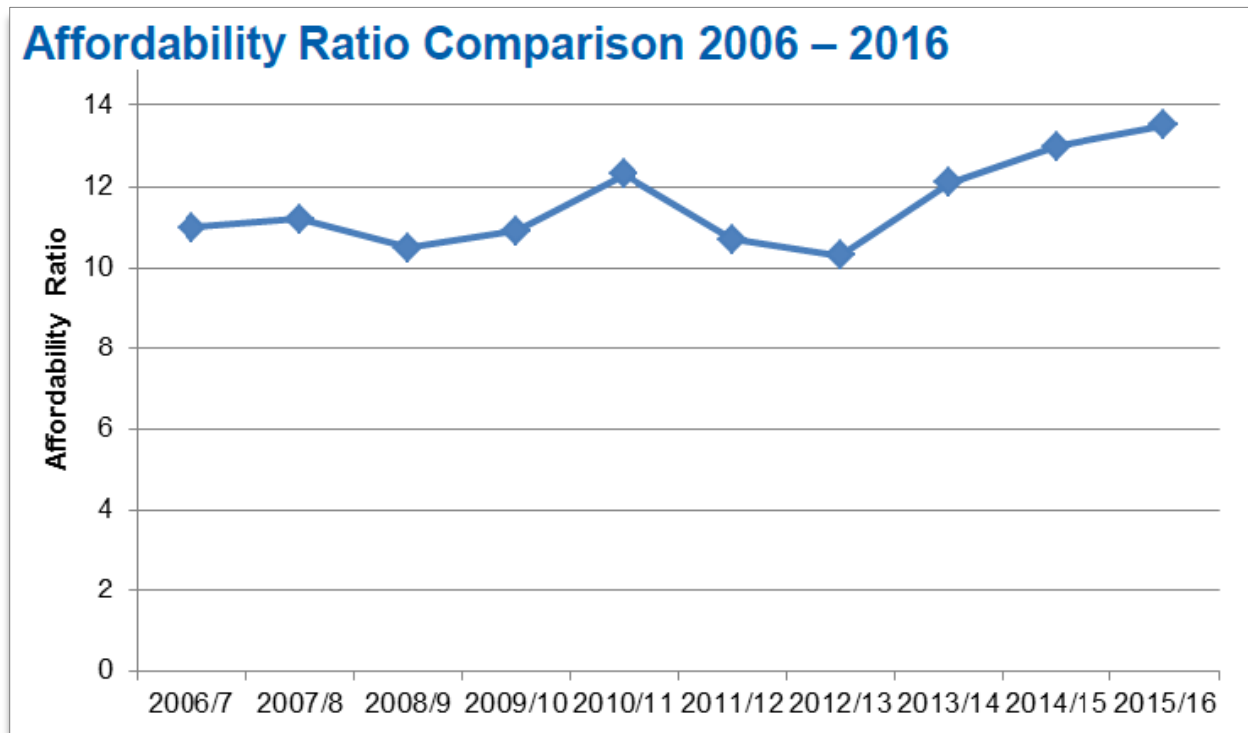


The Land Registry (March 2016) has reported that average house prices have increased from £404,000 to £447,000. This 10% increase is in line with the national trends reported by Halifax.

The table below shows the increases in the average house prices for all types of properties since March 2016. Flats and semi-detached properties have seen the highest increase whereas detached and terraced property prices have had a lower yet equal increase. This may reflect the demand for lower priced entry level housing.

Type	% of increase	Average price
Flat	15%	£252,000
Semi-detached	11%	£423,364
Detached	6%	£730,106
Terraced	6%	£356,724

Affordability has also been a significant challenge facing the housing market, increasing from 13.0 in March 2015 to 13.5 in March 2016. The graph below shows that since 2012/13, the affordability ratio has started to increase again after it began to fall in 2010/11, which reflects the wider economic picture. Reigate and Banstead is still the third most affordable borough out of the other Surrey boroughs and districts.

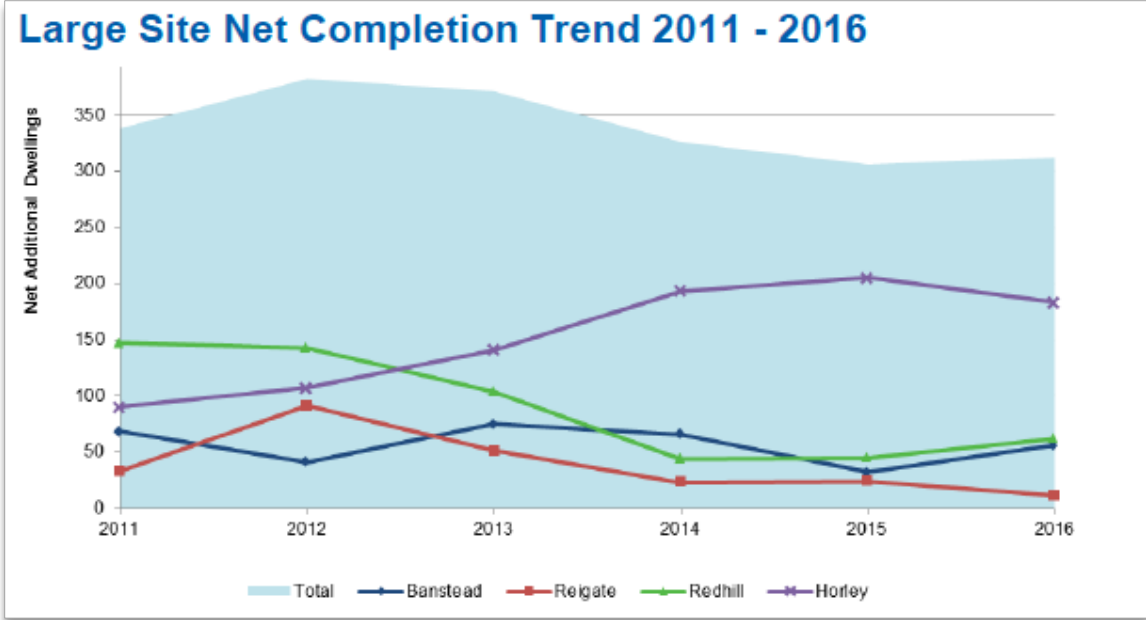


Source: Housing Monitor 2016

New Housing Delivery

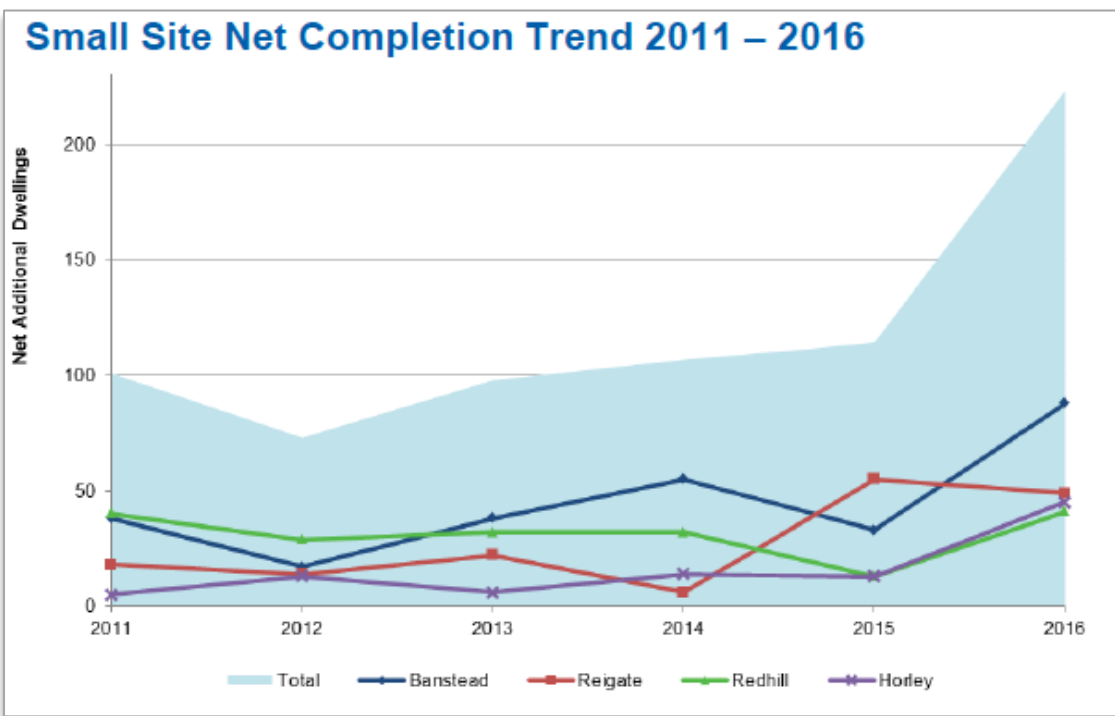
There have been a total of 1856 net housing completions from 2012 to 2016, 535 of which were completed in the last financial year which is a 27% increase from 2014/15.

The graph below shows that since 2011, the majority of completions have been in Horley (37%) and Redhill (27%). However, there has been a general decline in large site completions (sites over 10 units) over the past few years. In 2014/15, 73% of completions were on large sites however this reduced to 58% in 2015/16.



Source: Housing Monitor 2016

Nevertheless, there has been a significant increase in small site completions (sites less than 10 units). In 2014/15, 27% of completions were on small sites which increased to 42% in 2015/16. During the last 5 years, Horley had the greatest increase, 167%, of dwellings on small sites followed by a 100% increase in Banstead. However, there has been a 31% fall in Reigate.



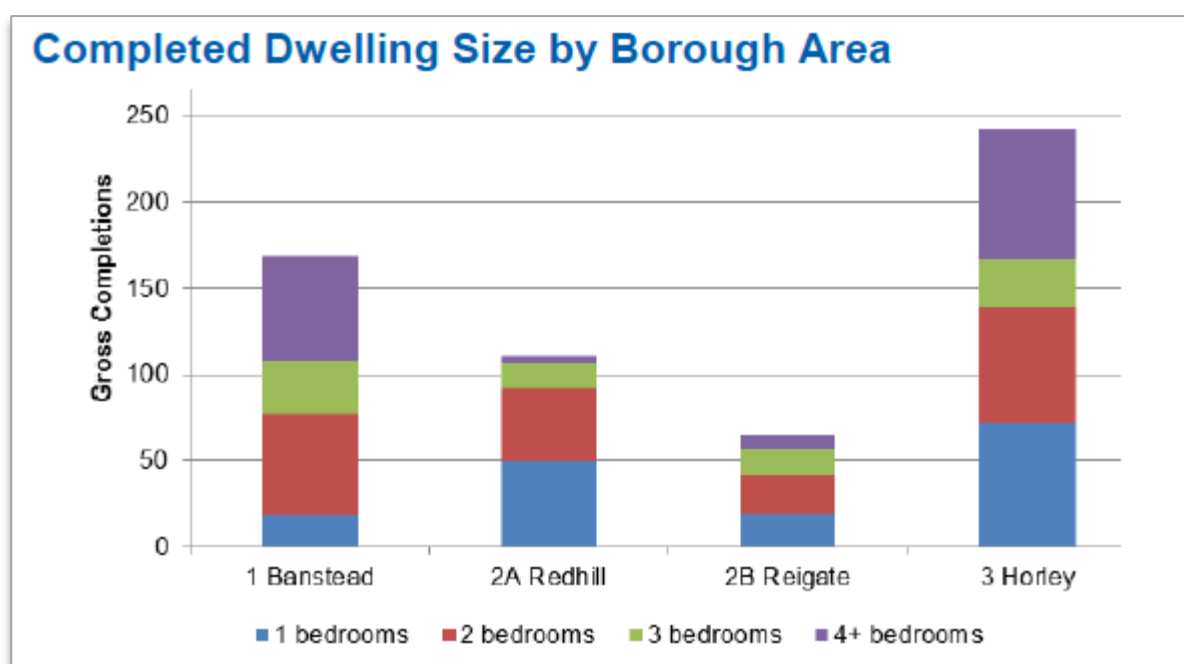
Source: Housing Monitor 2016

There has been an even split of the types of dwelling (houses and flats) completed in the borough during the last financial year. However the split varies by borough area. The table below shows Redhill has the largest proportion of flat completions, Banstead the highest proportion of houses and Horley has an almost even split in 2015/16:

Area	Flats	Houses
Banstead	32.5%	67.5%
Redhill	76.6%	23.4%
Reigate	56.9%	43.1%
Horley	48.3%	51.7%

Source: Housing Monitor 2016

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2012 Housing Market Recommendations advised 40% of new dwellings should be 1 – 2 bedroom dwellings and 60% 3 bedrooms or more. In 2015/16 a total of 60% of completed homes were 1 and 2 bedroom properties and 40% of completions were 3 and 4+ bedrooms.

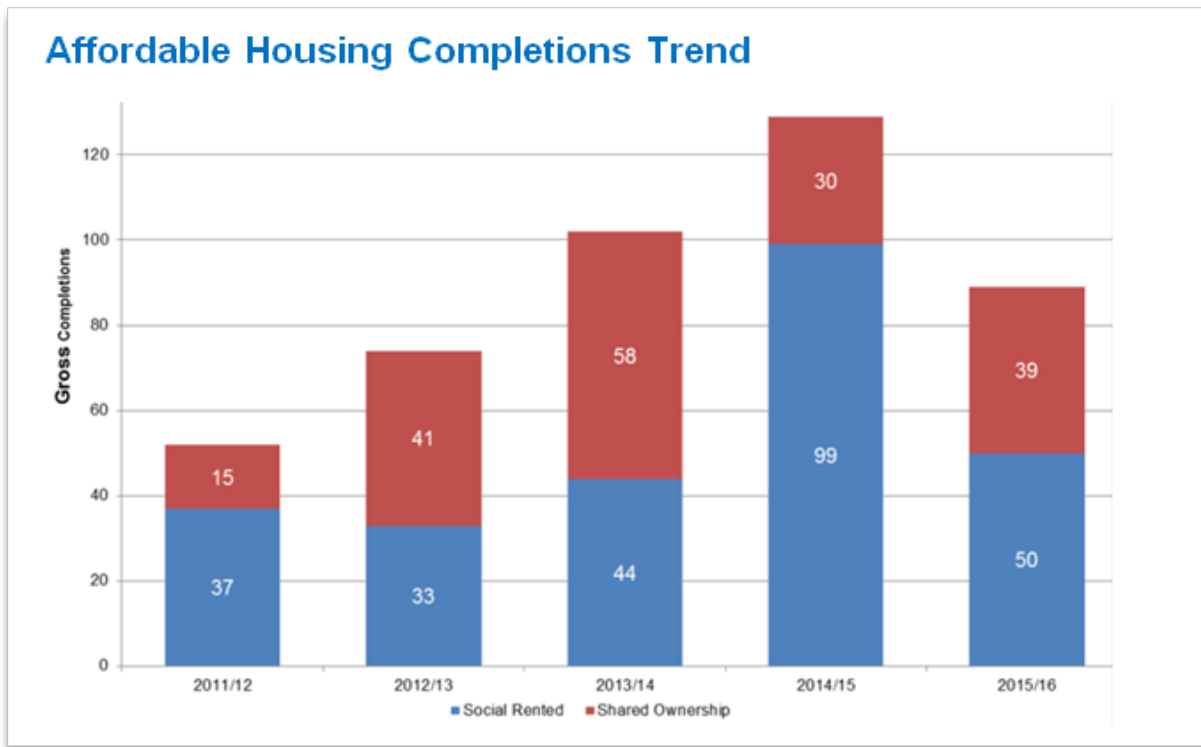


Source: Housing Monitor 2016

The table above shows the variation of completed dwelling size by borough area during 2015/16. Redhill and Horley have the highest number of completed 1 and 2 bedroom properties whereas Banstead and Horley have the greatest number of completed 3 and 4+ bedroom properties completions. This trend continues from the previous year.

Affordable housing

The Council's Core Strategy aims to enable the provision of 1,500 affordable homes between 2012 and 2027 equating to an average target of delivering 100 dwellings per annum. In 2015/16 89 affordable units were completed making up 15% of all gross completions. This is a reduction from the previous year where affordable unit completions made up 28.5% of all gross completions. There was been an increase in the number of social rented dwellings with 50 of the 89 dwellings a social rented tenure. The graph below shows that a total of 446 affordable units have been completed since 2011/12. The number of affordable housing completions had been increasing since 2011/12, however in 2015/16 the numbers decreased.



Source: Housing Monitor 2016

Rents

There is a great variance between social, affordable and private rent asking prices in the borough. The table below shows that the charges for privately renting are considerably higher when compared to both social and affordable rents.

Average local rent prices August 2016 (per calendar month)

No of bedrooms	Social rent	Affordable rent	Private rent
Studio	£402.22	£529.75	N/A
1 bed	£500.72	£536.81	£841
2 bed	£615.51	£862.33	£1,114
3 bed	£603.72	£1,030.29	£1,368
4 bed	£607.19	unavailable	£1,818

Source: Zoopla

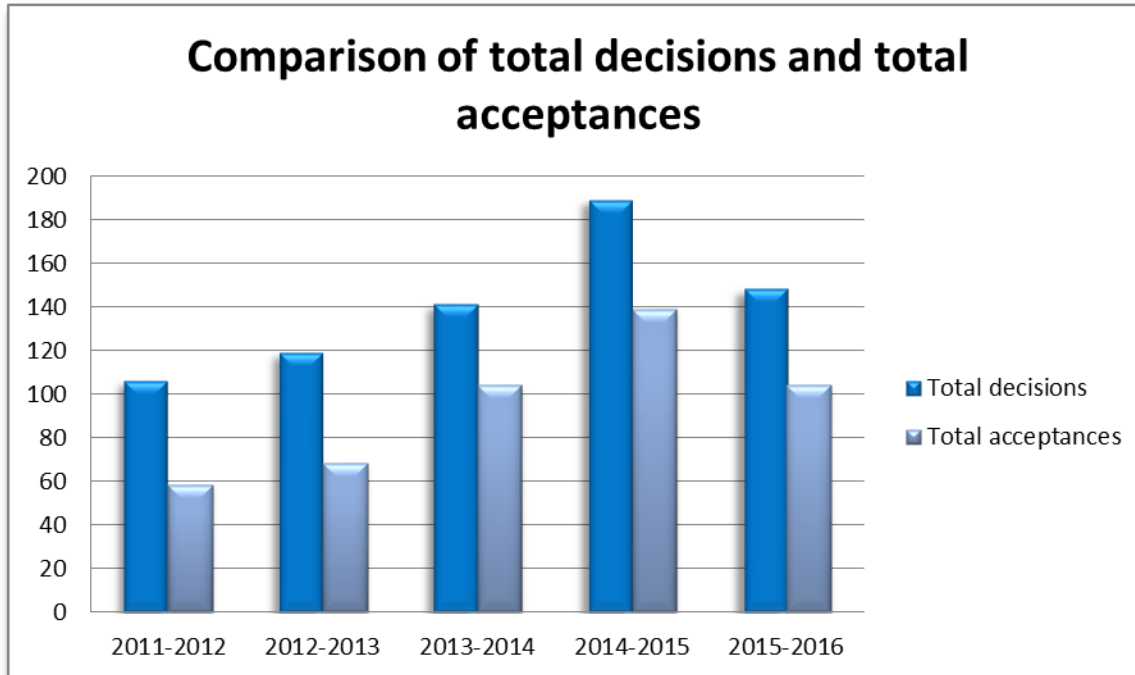
Although the borough still has many social rented properties, a significant number of new builds are set at affordable rent rates. Affordable rents are typically higher and the difference increases with the size of property. For example, it would cost clients £246.82 more each month to rent a 2 bedroom affordable rented property compared to renting a 2 bedroom social rented property. This has triggered the need for assessments of affordability for clients nominated to affordable rent homes. The affordability of social housing is becoming a common issue for households and in response the Council will begin undertaking more detailed financial checks of each new applicant joining the Housing Register. We will offer advice and guidance to help with income and affordability to ensure clients are in the best financial position when offered a tenancy.

Trends in homelessness

This section explores the number of homeless applications investigated during 2011-2016. It presents data about the households the Council accepted a duty to accommodate including total numbers, ethnicity, age, type, gender, the main causes and the main priority categories.

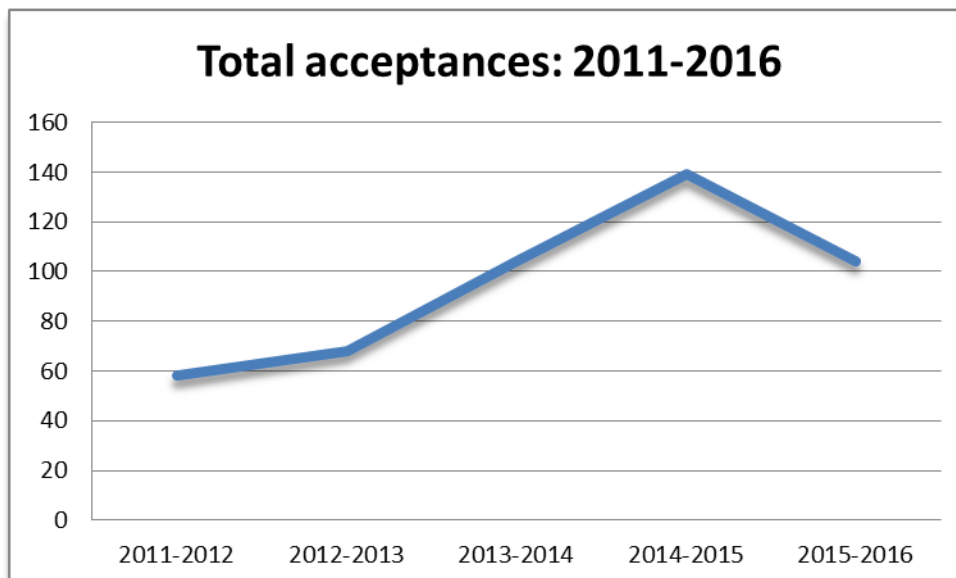
Homeless applications

The Council investigated 703 homelessness applications between 2011/2012 and 2015/2016.



Source: P1E

The graph above shows that both decisions and acceptances increased each financial year, reaching its peak in 2014-2015 with 189 decisions and 139 acceptances, but then both dropped to 148 decisions and 104 acceptances at the end of 2015-2016.

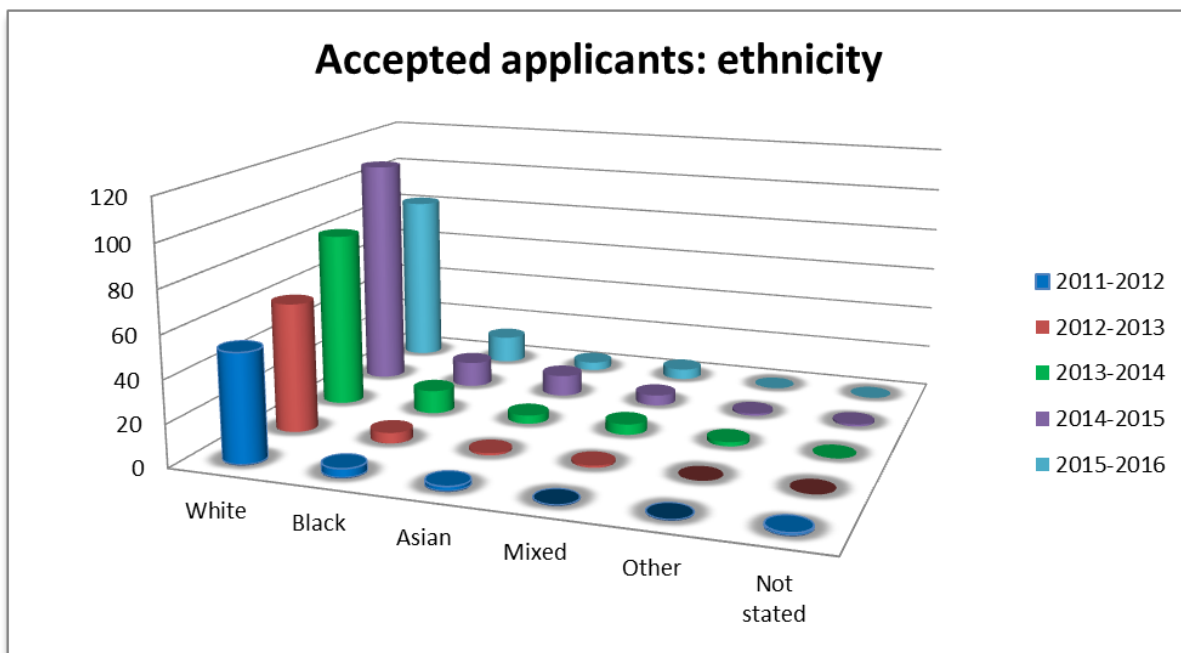


Source: P1E

After a steep increase from 2012-2013, the last financial year saw a decline in homelessness acceptances.

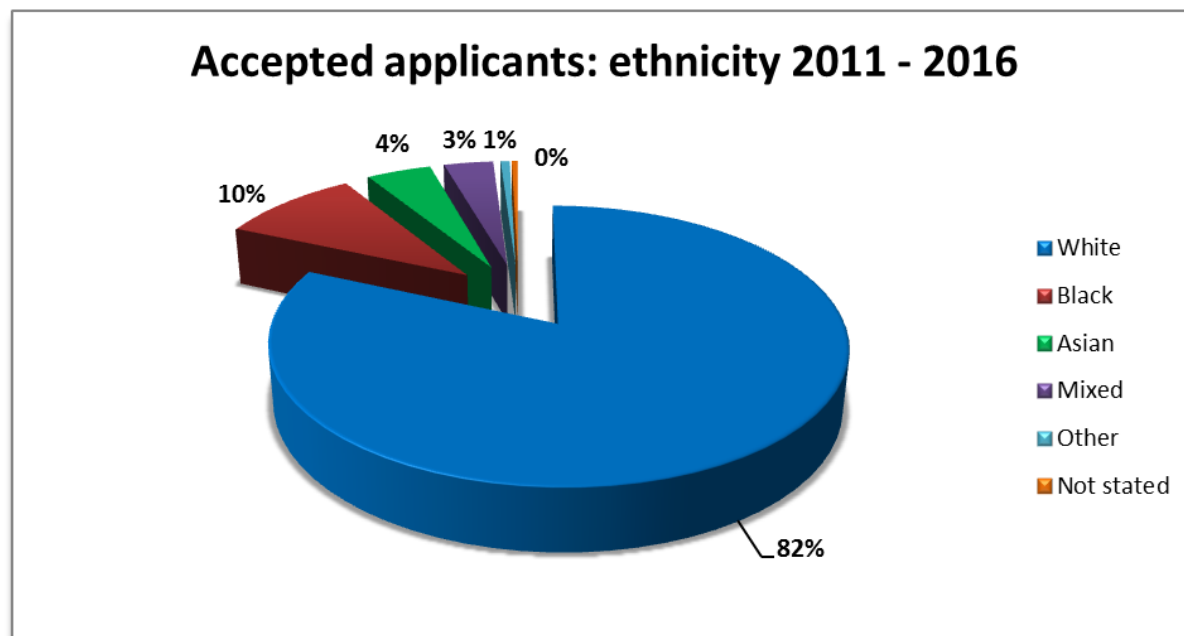
Homeless and ethnicity

The Council monitors the ethnicity of all households that make a homeless approach.



Source: P1E

There has been a steady increase in accepted households from a Black, Asian and Mixed backgrounds alongside a continuous rise of White ethnic households.

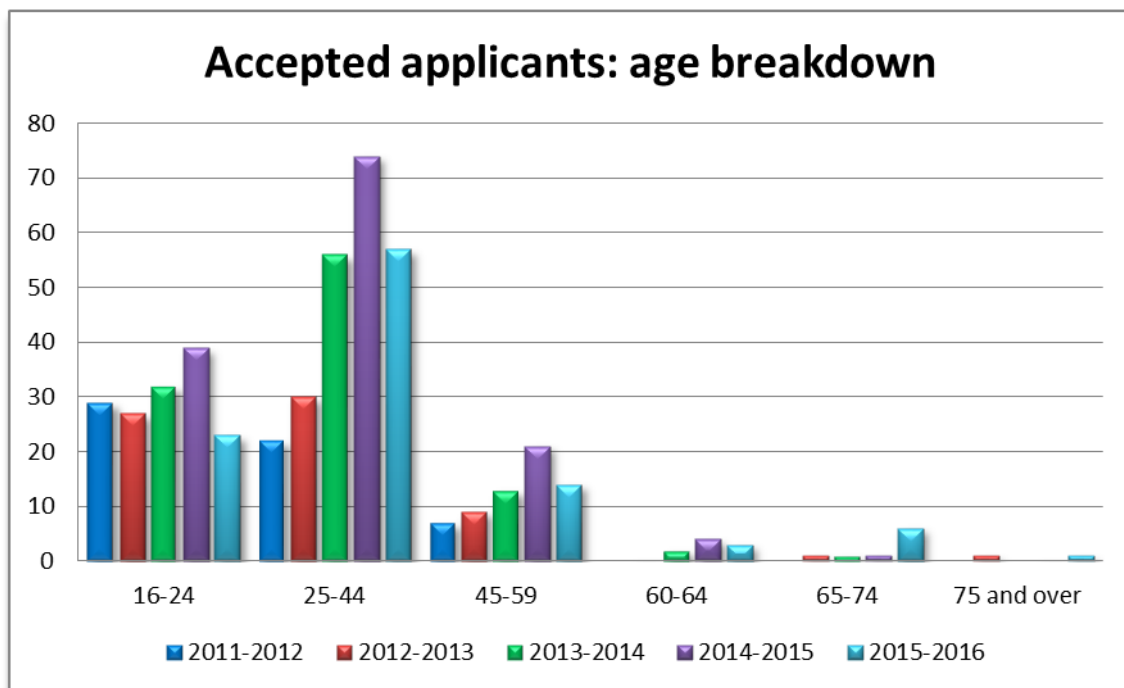


Source: P1E

There has been a 7% decrease of White accepted applicants since the last Homeless Strategy, however it remains the dominant ethnic category reflecting the 90.6% White population of the borough (Census 2011). The population of all other ethnic minorities in the borough total to 9.4% which indicates that the accepted households from all other ethnic minorities are overrepresented

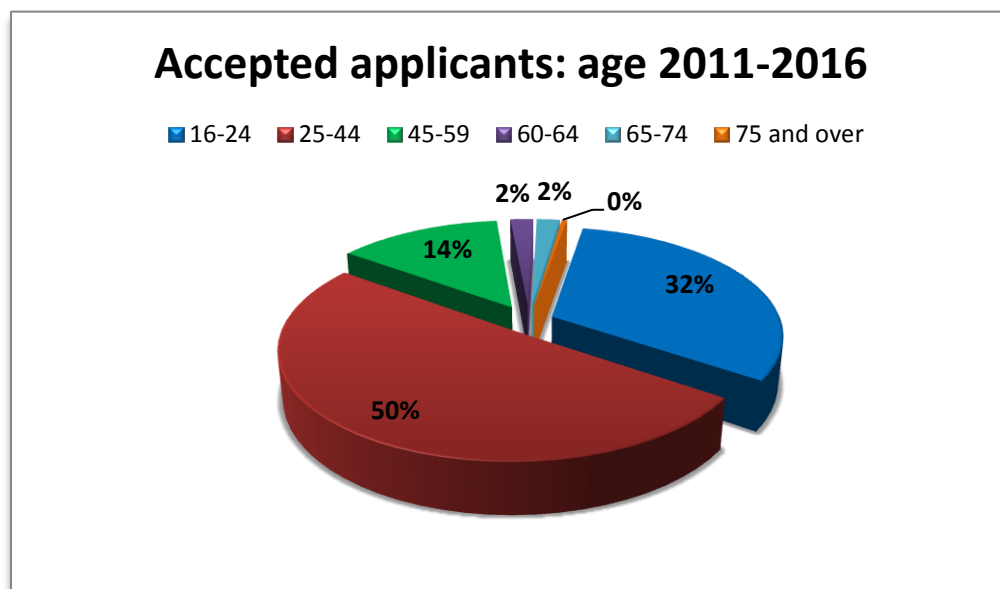
as the percentage almost doubles at 18%. However the data for the Census was collected in 2011, therefore the ethnic structure may have since changed.

Homelessness and age



Source: P1E

The 25-44 age group is the most common age group of all homeless households and has increased significantly since 2012. There has also been a noticeable increase in the 45-59 age group too.

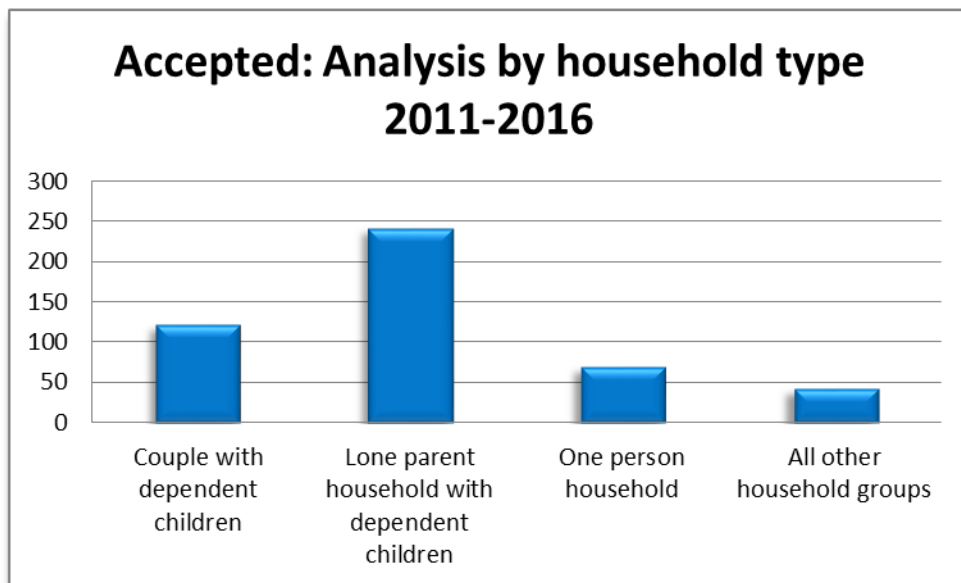


Source: P1E

Half of all accepted applicants in 2011-2016 have been from the 25-44 age group closely followed by the 16-24 group. This shows that homelessness tends to affect the younger population of the borough. The over 60 age group forms a smaller proportion of accepted households.

Homelessness and household types

Analysing the breakdown of household types is an important factor when assessing homelessness within the borough, understanding causes and initiatives to prevent it.

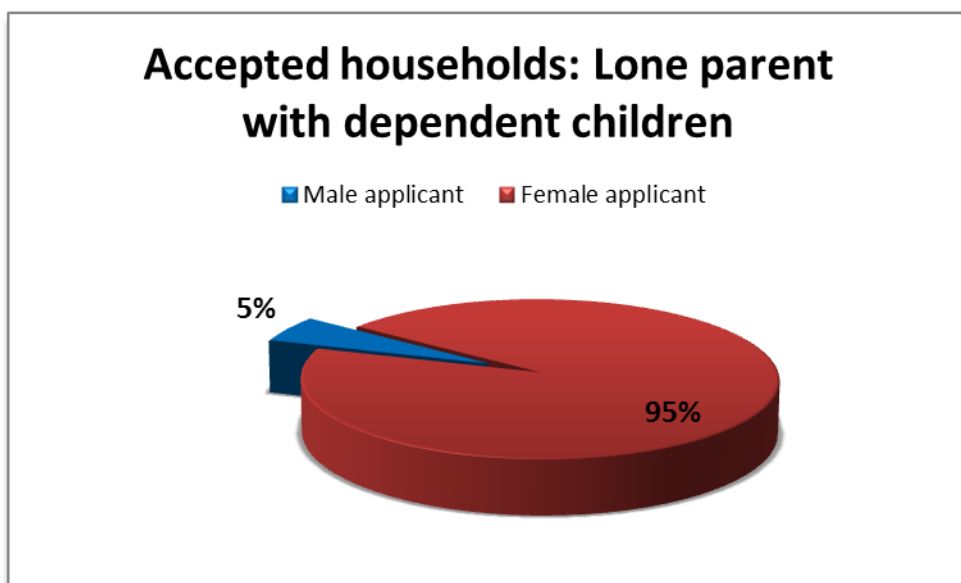


Within the borough lone parent with dependent children represent just over half of all accepted homeless applicants. The graph (right) also reveals that over 75% of all accepted homeless households have dependent children.

Source: P1E

Household type: gender breakdown

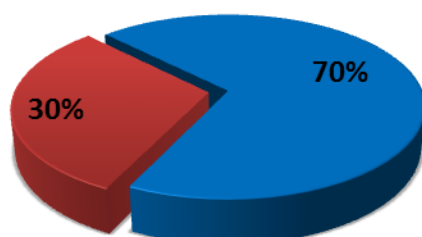
Both graphs below highlight the common gender themes amongst particular types of households. The lone parents with dependent children category is dominated by female applicants in a complete contrast to the predominance of male applicants in one person homeless households.



Source: P1E

Accepted households: one person household

■ Male applicant ■ Female applicant



Source: P1E

Causes of homelessness

There are various reasons why households become threatened with homelessness or are made homeless.

In the previous Homelessness Strategy there were no particular trends in the causes of homelessness. However the last 5 financial years have seen the development of 4 main causes of homelessness which categorise 75% of all accepted households.

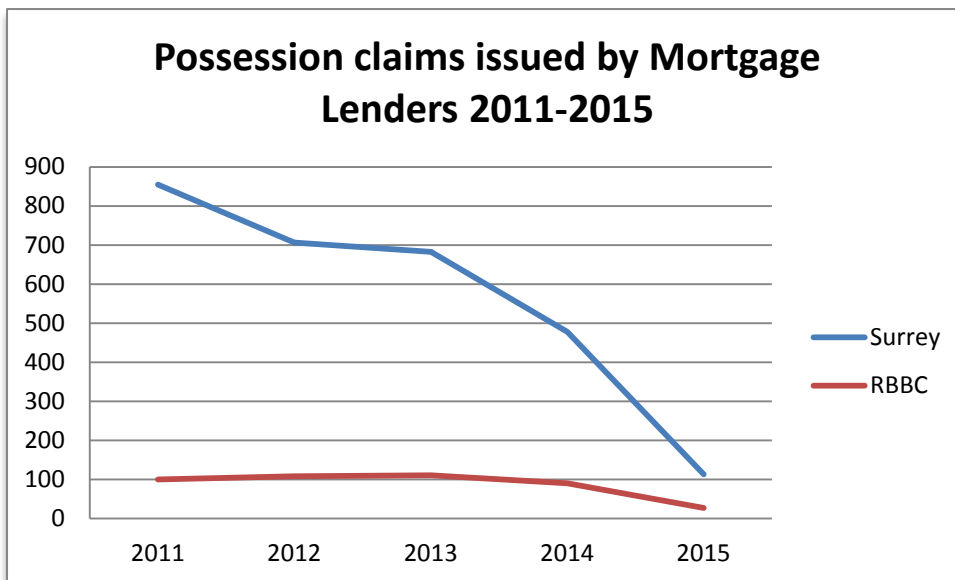
The table below shows that the most common cause of homelessness is the loss of rented/tied accommodation due to an AST termination. This cause has increased over the years and more than tripled from 2011-12 to 2015-15 totalling 30% of all causes. This is becoming a greater issue in the borough. A total of 22% of homelessness was caused by parental eviction, 14% by relatives/friends eviction and 9% due to a violent relationship breakdown with a partner.

Accepted applicants: causes of homelessness						
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total
Parental eviction	22	17	27	21	16	103
Relatives/friends eviction	8	16	15	13	13	65
Non-violent relationship breakdown - partner	2	2	9	4	5	22
Violent relationship breakdown – partner	3	8	8	15	9	43
Violent relationship breakdown - associated person	0	1	1	4	0	6
Other forms of violence	1	1	1	2	1	6
Racially motivated harassment	0	0	1	0	1	2
Other forms of harassment	0	0	0	1	2	3
Repossession of home - mortgage arrears	1	3	2	0	2	8
Rent arrears - RSL	0	0	0	3	1	4
Rent arrears - PRS	3	3	8	6	5	25
Loss of rented/tied accommodation due to AST termination	12	14	21	55	42	144
Other reasons than AST termination	1	0	1	2	0	4
Left prison / on remand	0	0	1	0	0	1
Left hospital	0	0	1	1	2	4
Left other institution or LA care	1	2	3	0	0	6
Other reason	4	1	5	12	5	27
TOTAL	58	68	104	139	104	473

Source: P1E

Mortgage repossession

There have been a total of 436 possession claims issued since 2011 – 2015 (Shelter databank February 2016) in the borough. Out of these claims, only 8 households sought assistance from the Council for mortgage repossessions during this time indicating that most households facing homelessness because of repossession do not approach the Council directly for assistance. The graph below shows that the number of possession claims made by mortgage lenders has declined drastically for both Surrey and RBBC. In 2011, a total 855 possession claims were made by mortgage lenders which gradually reduced to 113 in 2015. Similarly, a total of 100 possession claims were made in 2011 which reduced to 27 in 2015. Despite 436 possession claims issued between 2011 and 2015, only 105 repossessions actually took place within this time frame (Gov: Mortgage and Landlord Possession Statistics 2015). This also explains why there was no detrimental effect on the Council when the Government stopped its Mortgage Rescue Scheme.



Source: Shelter Databank (February 2016)

Homelessness and main priority categories

In common with the previous Homelessness Strategy, the vast majority of accepted homeless applicants fall under the dependent children category. They form 74% of all accepted households and mark a 27% increase from the last strategy. The next largest group is people with a physical disability, followed by pregnancy (but no other children).

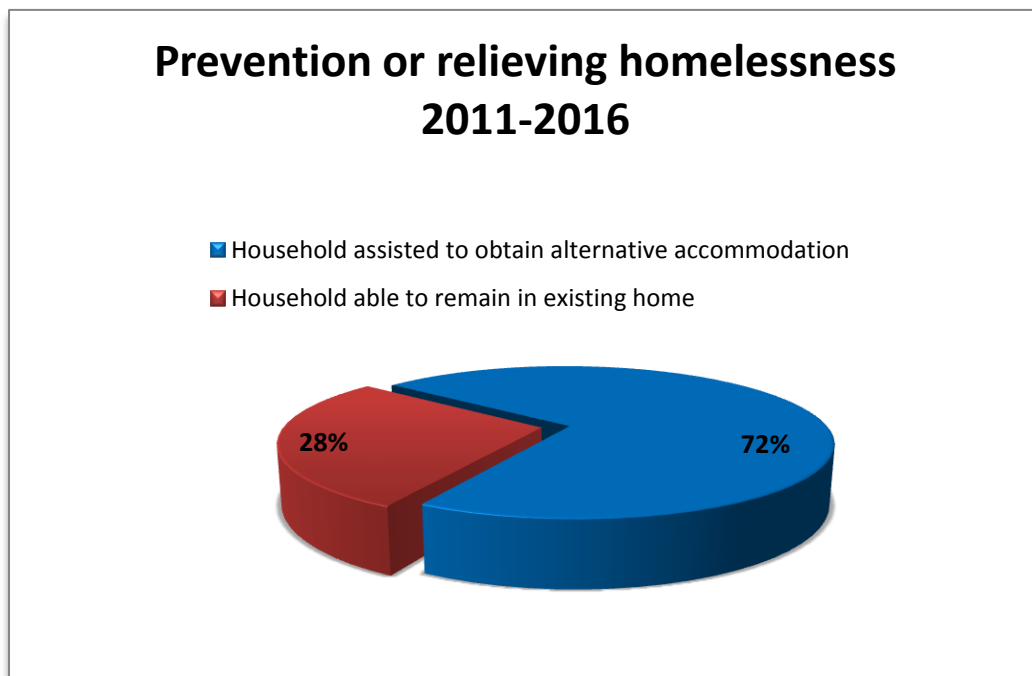
The number of 16/17 year old homeless applicants has reduced to 5% from 9% since the last Strategy which demonstrates the Council's strong and effective partnership with the Youth Support Service (YSS) who manage all homeless households aged 16 to 17.

Accepted applicants: main priority category						
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total
Dependent children	44	53	76	96	77	346
Pregnant & no other dependent children	7	6	7	11	5	36
Aged 16/17 years old	1	1	0	0	0	2
"Care leaver" aged 18 to 20 years old	0	0	3	0	0	3
Old age	0	2	0	2	6	10
Physical disability	3	4	12	13	10	42
Mental illness or disability	3	2	4	15	4	28
Drug dependency	0	0	0	1	0	1
Alcohol dependency	0	0	0	0	1	1
Been in "Care"	0	0	1	0	1	2
Violence/threat of violence/domestic violence	0	0	2	1	0	3

Source: P1E

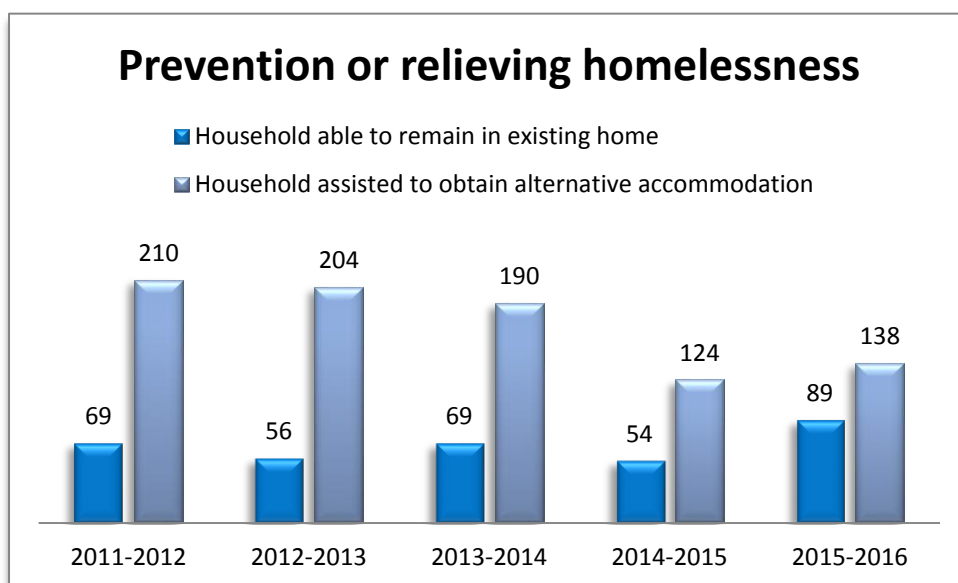
Homelessness prevention

Preventing homelessness is the focal point of all housing options undertaken by Housing Services. Including non-statutory homeless households, over 1200 households have been prevented or relieved from homelessness between 2011 and 2016. Through successful advice and assistance, households were helped to find and secure alternative accommodation or to remain in their existing home which avoided the need for a homeless application.



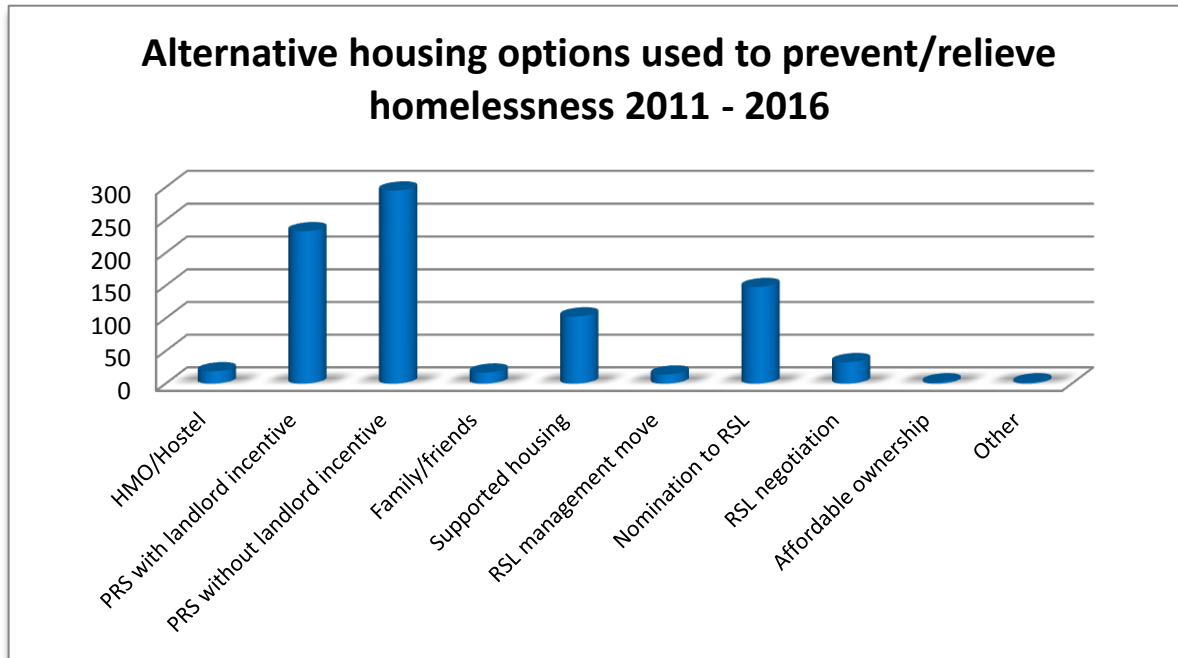
Source: P1E

The number of households assisted into obtaining alternative accommodation was highest in 2011/2012; however the figures began to decrease until 2015/16. On the other hand, the number of households assisted to remain in their existing home fluctuated from 2011/12 to 2014/2015, however in 2015/16 it saw its highest increase.



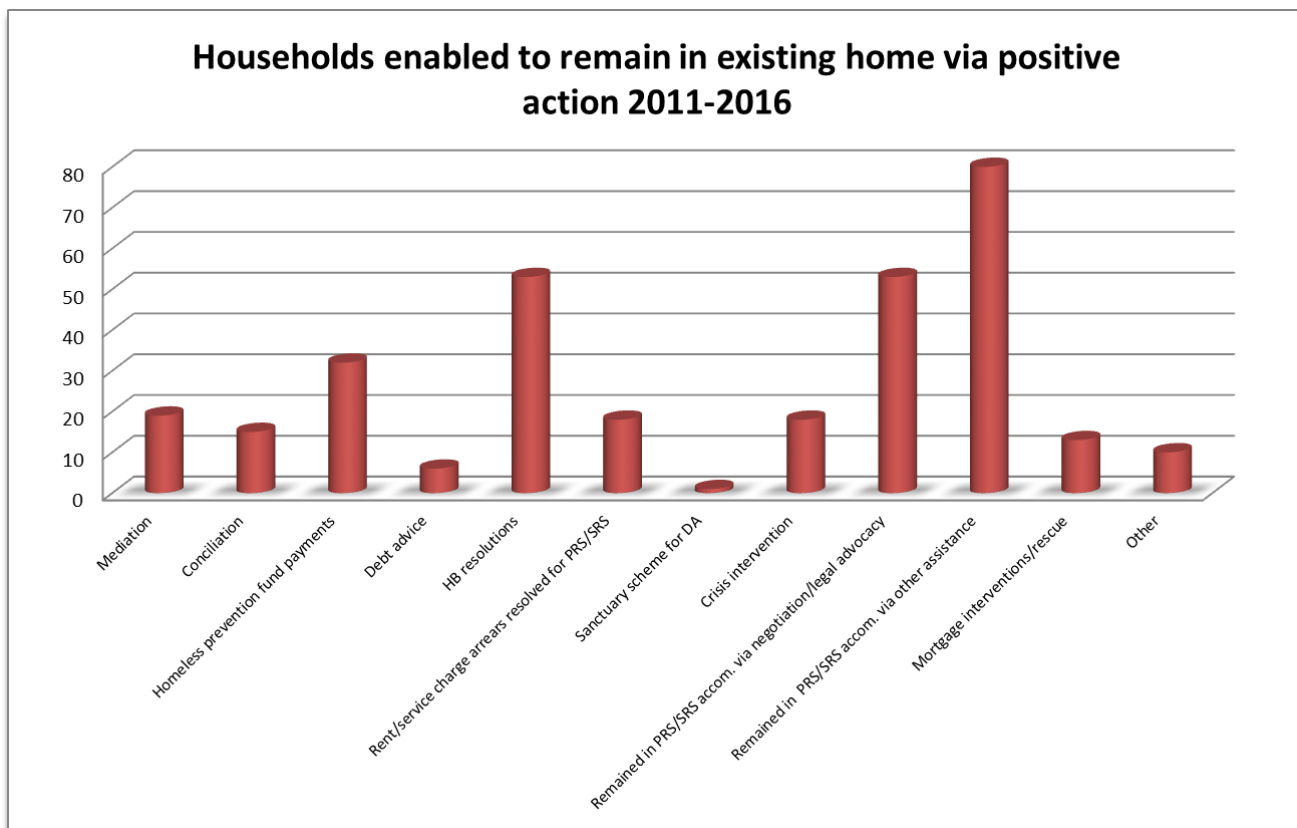
Source: P1E

Continuing the work of the previous Homelessness Strategy, the graph below shows assistance into the private rented sector without a landlord incentive has been the most frequently used housing option. This is closely followed by help into the private rented sector through landlord incentive schemes and nominating households to the social rented sector via the Housing Register waiting list. This latter option is particularly used to place qualifying applicants into sheltered accommodation. This is because there is a good supply of this type of accommodation.



Source: P1E

The table above shows that the Council has helped applicants threatened with homelessness to remain in their existing accommodation through various means. Many households were able to remain in their private rented accommodation or social housing accommodation through other assistance, such as applicants securing Suspended Possession Orders, landlords retracting their eviction notices/extending tenancies and also support from organisations such as the Police to confirm the security of remaining in their home. Resolving Housing Benefit issues and negotiating / providing legal advocacy have both been equally successful in enabling households to remain in their accommodation.



Source: P1E

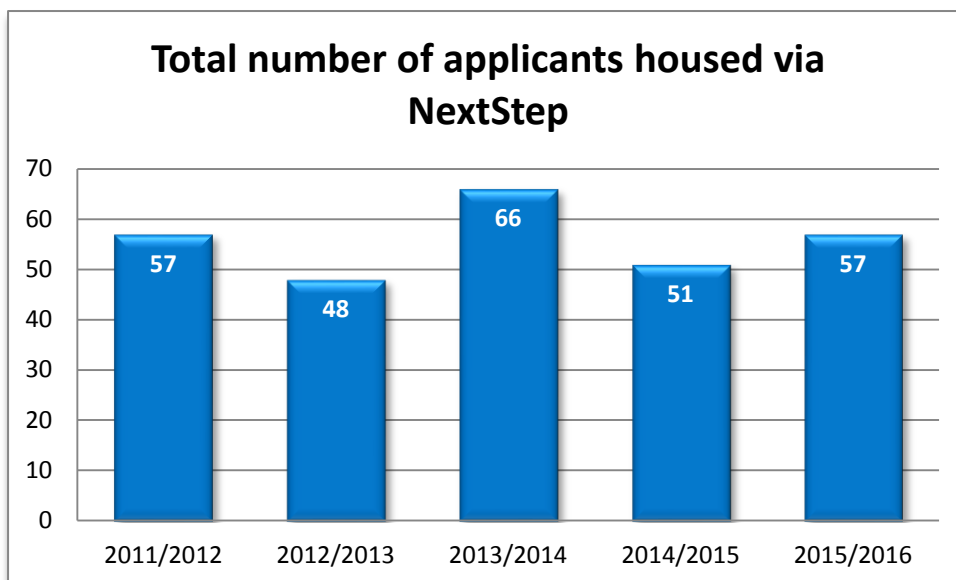
Available tools to prevent homelessness

- **Support and advice**

The Council's Housing Options Officers and Tenancy Advisors aim to prevent homelessness wherever possible. They undertake detailed casework including financial assessments and benefits advice, make referrals to other organisations like Community Debt Advice, as well as advising clients on the legal validity of Notices, negotiating and mediating with landlords, letting agents as well as parents and other friends / relatives of applicants. They also negotiate with a range of organisations for example Adult Social Care, Children Services, Youth Support Service, Police, Probation, Family Support Team, client's solicitors, Registered Social Landlords, charitable organisations, the law courts and bailiffs to avoid homelessness or to delay homelessness or to avoid or reduce time spent by households in B&B.

- **NextStep Rent Deposit Guarantor Scheme**

This scheme is run by NextStep YMCA East Surrey and is funded by the Council. NextStep works with private landlords to secure tenancies for clients referred to the scheme by the Council because they are at risk of homelessness. NextStep offers rent deposit guarantee bonds, free inventories and tenant introductions and provides landlords and tenants with support during the first 6 months of their tenancy. Clients are encouraged to find a potential property independently although NextStep sources many of the properties and landlords.



The graph above shows the number of households that have been housed over the last 5 years, with the highest number in 2013/2014. NextStep has only ever paid out one claim, costing £650 from the bond pot for the loss of rent during the last 5 financial years. This is because NextStep maintains strong long-term partnerships with landlords and works to resolve issues so that tenancies are maintained.

- **Housing Register**

The Housing Register Allocations Policy has been amended twice in the last 5 years in response to the Localism Act and also to manage the housing expectations of households in the borough. Nominations through the Register are the main source of accommodation for low income households but the Register is not able to offer a quick solution to households facing homelessness. The table below shows that the number of nominations received in the last financial year have decreased in comparison to the previous years. During the last financial year, 53 of the 295 nominations were to sheltered accommodation. Typically, nominations to sheltered housing equate to approximately 13% of all the nominations received each year.

Year	Total no of nominations
2011/2012	303
2012/2013	349
2013/2014	321
2014/2015	361
2015/2016	295

The Housing Register Policy is written to encourage households to privately rent as applicants who are a '*Homeseeker currently living in private rented accommodation and the current tenancy is less than 4 years*' (Section 7.1) will qualify for the Band C priority group. Previously, homeseekers in the private rented sector were excluded from the Housing Register. This is a long term solution which promotes the PRS whilst applicants wait on the Housing Register list.

Households owed the homelessness duty by the Council are placed in band H of the Register. This is a priority band on the Register.

- **Money and Debt Advice**

Budgeting and debt issues are a common problem experienced by households facing homelessness. The Council has published a Money Advice fact sheet on its website with basic advice and sign posting to local and national organisations able to assist. Information is also provided in the Housing Options Toolkit. The Council works closely with Community Debt Advice (CDA) a specialist money advice service staffed by volunteers. Clients are referred to CDA who offer practical help and advice to get debts under control, make affordable offers to creditors and complete income and expenditure financial statements. Other local agencies including Citizens Advice Bureau and Moneywise (for Raven tenants) also offer this service.

- **Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) fund**

The DHP fund is administered by Housing Benefit in partnership with Housing Services. The fund is used to assist qualifying households who are at risk of homelessness and is a useful tool for the Housing Options team. The payments can be used to fund rent in advance, deposits, rent arrears and bridge shortfalls between rent and benefit payments. This fund has prevented homelessness for a number of clients.

Total DHP expenditure in the last 3 financial years

Year	DHP contribution	Total spend
2013/2014	£152,284	£159,813
2014/2015	£176,372	£178,154
2015/2016	£136,684	£147,298

DHP expenditure for Housing Options in the last 2 financial years

Year	Total spend
2014/2015	£63,519.64
2015/2016	£74,413.62

The Housing Options Team has assisted clients to access DHPs to secure alternative accommodation (e.g. rent deposit) and to help clients with short term rental costs while the claimant secures and moves to alternative accommodation. Over the last 5 financial years, the DHP contribution has increased which has enabled the Council to use it in a more practical and proactive way to prevent homelessness and it is now a critical prevention tool.

- **Repossession Prevention Fund**

The DCLG made a one-off payment in 2009 of £47,500 followed by a top of up £30,000 in 2012. This fund, similar to the DHP, is used to cover costs that may stop a household from becoming homeless.

Year	Total spend
2013/2014	£14,154.65
2014/2015	£27,616.98
2015/2016	£52,457.69

Up until 2013/14 the Fund was little used but is now a flexible tool that can be used in a number of ways to avoid homelessness. The table above shows that compared to 2013/14, total expenditure has more than tripled in the last financial year. The Fund was exhausted in 2016/17 and a further £20,000 was secured as a top up from the Council's Corporate Plan Delivery Fund. The table below shows how the Council has taken various measures to avoid clients becoming homeless using the RPF during the last financial year.

How RPF has been used (2015/16)	Cost
Rent in advance / deposits / rent in advance with deposits as single payment	£489 to £2275
Clearing rent arrears	£400 to £2006.76
Work to property	£2990
Garden clearance	£450
Skip hire	£366

- Housing Advice Self-Help Tool**

The Self-Help Tool (previously known as the Housing Wizard) is an online service that gives practical housing advice and other additional support that relates to individual needs. Clients simply fill in their details to create an account and answer a set of questions which then produces a tailored action plan of advice and guidance. The information will be saved on-line and can be accessed again at any time through the website. Over the last 2 financial years, 295 people have used the service, of which 121 completed the whole tool. We acknowledge that the Self-Help Tool is currently not promoted or used to its full potential and aim to re-introduce it as a main homelessness prevention tool to avoid common life experiences turning into a housing crisis.

- Parashoot**

The Council makes referrals to Parashoot for households with support needs. Funded by the County Housing Related Support budget and operating from Raven Housing Trust, it offers eligible clients up to 6 months support to help maintain their tenancy.

- Winter Night Shelter**

The Shelter for rough sleepers opens for 3 months during winter and is operated by Renewed Hope Trust. It also allows the Council and East Surrey Outreach Service (eSOS) to use the time spent in the Shelter to help find alternative accommodation before the Shelter closes. The Council has made a donation towards the running of the Shelter each year and intends to continue to do so.

Year	Total number of beds used	Number of guests	Number of volunteers
2011/2012	277	23	N/A
2012/2013	527	25	404
2013/2014	583	21	540
2014/2015	200	6	231
2015/2016	381	18	289

The table above shows that although 2012/13 had the most guests, the highest number of beds used was in 2013/14. There was also a significant drop in the number of guests in 2014/15 which then increased again in the following year.

- **Rent in advance / deposit**

The Council offers a minimum offer of £500 towards rent in advance or a deposit paid directly to a private landlord for all non-priority need homeless households with a local connection to the borough of Reigate and Banstead. In the last 2 financial years, a total of 189 households have been assisted through this scheme; 63 in 2014/15 and a further 126 in 2015/16.

- **Supported accommodation**

The Council is able to access supported accommodation for clients which require it. This includes YMCA East Surrey Hillbrook House for young people aged up to 30, Wayside hostel for young women, women's refuges, low support accommodation for ex-offenders, out of borough direct access hostels, accommodation provided by Transform Housing & Support for people with mental health issues and/or learning difficulties, dry houses for those that have successfully completed drug or alcohol programmes and supported accommodation provided by Active Prospects for people with mental health needs and / or learning disabilities.

- **Family Support Team**

Occasionally, referrals are made to the FST who support families who are experiencing a range of difficult interwoven issues. Families who have two or more of the following issues are eligible for the programme:

- Children who need help
- Children who have not been attending school regularly
- Parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
- Parents and children with a range of health problems
- Families affected by domestic violence and abuse
- Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness

The FST offer intensive support for up to 18 weeks with their main task being to stabilise the family function. The FST often seek advice from the Housing Team related to any Housing issues to ensure the right measures are put in place for families to avoid a housing crisis. The issues range from the risk of homelessness to matters regarding the Housing Register.

- **Sanctuary Scheme, ESDAS**

Housing part fund the Sanctuary Scheme run by East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service which works with the Police, clients and landlords to make properties safer for domestic abuse sufferers. Accommodation is made safer by increasing security to doors, windows, fencing, outdoor lighting and installing a 'safe room' in the property. In the borough of Reigate and Banstead, 20 households were assisted in 2014/2015 and a further 6 households assisted in 2015/16.

- **Rough sleepers**

East Surrey Outreach Service (eSOS), set up via the East Surrey Housing departments, proactively engages with rough sleepers and those threatened with rough sleeping (e.g. sofa surfers). They have a links to hostels and supported accommodation throughout Surrey as well as a good relationship with the Police and Probation. They also reconnect clients with areas they originate from if no connection is found with the Reigate and Banstead Area. The annual Rough Sleepers snapshot Survey carried out on November 2015 showed that there were 3 rough sleepers in the borough, 7 less than 2014.

- **Mortgage Interest Benefit**

Managed by the DWP, it can provide support to those who have a mortgage but have lost their employment. It only covers the interest on a mortgage for a fixed period of time. Under the scheme households wait six months before support is provided. From April 2016/17 households will wait nine months before support is provided and the support will be replaced by a loan which must be re-paid.

- **Financial Rent Guarantee**

This is offered to landlords in cases where this is the only obstacle for a homeless household moving into private rented accommodation rather than B&B or temporary accommodation. Currently, this is a pilot scheme being used for only financially stable households. Nevertheless the Council intends to develop this scheme with further funding and allocation of officer time. RBBC is the only local authority in Surrey which is operating a Rent Guarantee scheme. Since 2014/2015 to 2015/16, 8 households have been assisted through this scheme.

Housing Register

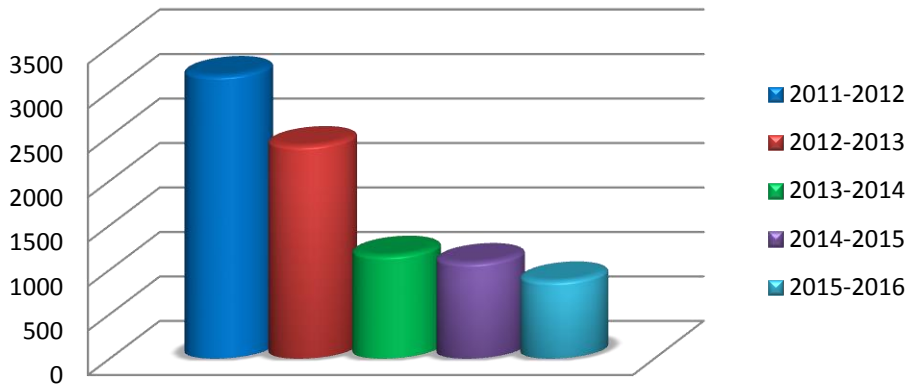
The Housing Register and Allocations Policy was updated in May 2015 which redefined the banding system and introduced a revised local connection rule and community contribution rules.

All housing register applicants are placed in Band A-D and Band H. The bands are broken down in levels of priority:

- Band A: Urgent priority
- Band B: High priority
- Band C: Medium priority and Community Contribution qualification
- Band D: Low priority Band C without Community Contribution/others
- Band H: High priority homeless households to whom the Council has accepted a duty to accommodate.

Applicants in Band B,C and D make online bids via HomeChoice, a choice-based lettings scheme. Applicants in band A and H receive suitable direct nominations from the Council.

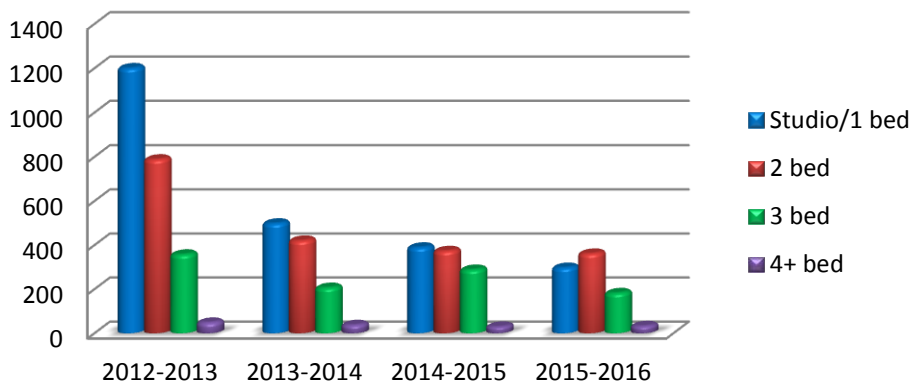
Total number of applicants on the Housing Register 2011-2016



The number of applicants in the last financial year on the Housing Register has reduced by almost 30% since 2011-2012. A significant drop in numbers can be seen in the graph above after 2012-2013 which is largely due to an update in the Housing Register and Allocations Policy which restricted the qualification rules for the Register, resulting in the removal of many ineligible applicants. A further review of the Policy in 2015 also resulted in a slight reduction in households eligible to join the Housing Register.

Since the last financial year, the number of households applying for the Housing Register each month is increasing.

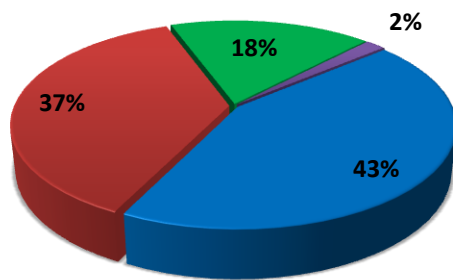
Bedroom number requirements 2011-2016



From 2012, the Council began to record the number of bedrooms required by all households on the Housing Register. Until 2015, the highest demand amongst applicants was for studio/1bed properties however in 2015 this was overtaken by the need of 2 beds. Furthermore, a 3 bed property requirement has also reduced and the need of a 4 bed remains the lowest.

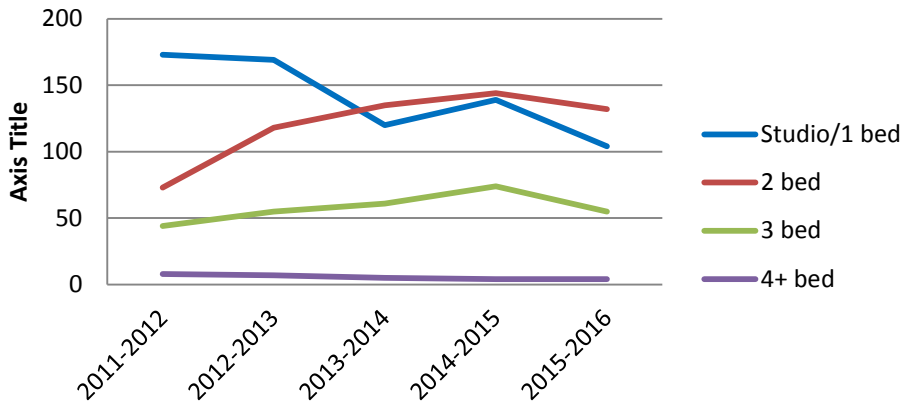
Applicants housed via the Housing Register 2011-2016

■ Studio/1 bed
 ■ 2 bed
 ■ 3 bed
 ■ 4+ bed



The graph above indicates that the percentage of different bedroom number properties allocated to Housing Register applicants reflects the demand for bedroom requirements as seen in the previous graph with almost half of all applicants allocated to studio/1 bed properties closely followed by 2 bed properties. Since the introduction of Band H, 65 homeless households have been housed via the Register in the last financial year.

Property size trends: Total no of applicants housed



There are noticeable trends in the availability of different sized properties over the last 5 years. The number of applicants housed in studio/1 beds has seen a marked decline over the period. On the other hand, the number of applicants housed in 2 beds increased since 2011-12 and saw only a slight reduction by 2015-16. Similarly, applicants housed in 3 beds also increased over the last 5 years reaching its peak in 2014-15, although numbers have begun to decrease more recently. The requirement of a 4+ bed property remained low throughout this time.

Year	Total no of applicants housed
2011 - 2012	298
2012 - 2013	349
2013 - 2014	321
2014 - 2015	361
2015 - 2016	295
Total	1624

After an increase from 2011-12, the total number of applicants housed varied slightly, however the total dropped significantly in 2015-16 which reflects the reduction of applicants on the Register following the changes made to the banding definitions in the Allocations Policy in 2015. Not all properties are general needs family accommodation and typically, nominations to sheltered housing equate to approximately 13% of all the nominations received each year.

RBBC Temporary accommodation

The Council has purchased 8 units to use as emergency accommodation using S106 monies for affordable housing. These properties are used for homeless households. Often they are used for homeless applicants with a poor tenancy record that prevents them from accessing tenancies through the private sector or housing associations. This gives households the opportunity to build a good tenancy history in Council owned accommodation so that they are in a better position to secure tenancies in the future.

TA purchased by RBBC

Area	Type	Size
Reigate	Flat	2 bed
Redhill	Maisonette	2 bed
Redhill	Flat	1 bed
Redhill	Flat	2 bed
Merstham	Flat	3 bed
Merstham	Flat	1 bed
Horley	House	3/4 bed
Horley	Flat	3 bed

Emergency accommodation

The Council has become heavily reliant on emergency self-contained bed and breakfast accommodation due to the shortage of emergency accommodation in the borough. All B&B placements are in London, predominantly South London. It costs the Council up to £100 per night to place homeless households in B&B and the full costs are not recovered from the tenant. The Council does not reserve or block book B&B accommodation so households are placed in the area where a suitable vacancy is available on that day. The rising number of households in B&B caused an over spend of the 2015/16 Housing Budget. The continued use of emergency out-of-borough accommodation is unsustainable. The Council accommodates an average of 25 households per night in this accommodation at a cost of around £3,000 per week. In response, the Council is exploring options to develop its own emergency accommodation in the borough.