

Homelessness Review 2018/23

Summary of findings

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Executive Summary - Key themes identified in the review.

Develop a more efficient and responsive approach to homelessness in Croydon.

Ensuring that an approach is adopted that seeks to assist those facing homelessness at the earliest opportunity is a priority for the Council. Our benchmarking suggests that Croydon has a proportionately higher level of those who have been assessed as being owed a relief duty than other London Boroughs who are preventing homelessness by earlier intervention. The re-organisation of our Housing Needs Service will enable us to better tailor our responses to the needs of residents as well as achieve an intervention within the 56 days recommended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2016.

Reduce the reliance on temporary accommodation.

Although the Council faces a difficult local and national operating environment in terms of finding/procuring properties for homeless applicants, it does recognise that the use of temporary and bed and breakfast accommodation can be a negative experience and affect the well-being of many applicants especially those with families. It is also an expensive service for the Council and in an environment where Councils are struggling to provide locally based housing for residents is likely to remain a challenge for the Croydon.

Maximising the supply of affordable housing

Over the past five years, the demand for affordable housing provision has risen significantly in the London area. Councils have struggled to provide enough new housing both directly and through Registered Social providers and this is particularly the case in Croydon because of its unfavourable financial situation. Extending housing supply by supporting house building initiatives through partnership work with registered social providers as well as developing links with landlords to procure locally available private sector accommodation will continue to be a priority for the Council.

At the same time, work in managing the supply of housing will continue in the ways set out in Chapter 4 and may involve using our statutory powers to improve housing conditions in the Private Sector.

Continue our rough sleeping initiatives.

According to statistics collected by CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and Information Network) through the London Mayor, Croydon work with the highest number of rough sleepers of all outer London Boroughs.

Despite a recent rise in street homelessness, Croydon's work in combating rough sleeping has proved effective in comparison with other South-West London Boroughs as shown by the performance in avoiding no "second night out." Yet it is recognised that nuisance from Rough Sleepers is endemic and on occasions more

effective enforcement action may be needed against those who cause anti-social behaviour.

The service provided by Croydon Reach is subject to a retendering process in 2023/24 and the task will be to continue improving the level of performance in terms of “No Second Night out” in the face of London –wide increases in rough sleeping. Additionally, successfully tackling concerns that are expressed by Residents about the consistent presence of anti-social behaviour amongst a minority of this cohort group will be a priority for the Council.

Restoring local Partnership work

A consultation with residents and key stakeholders will take place to inform the homelessness strategy. This presents an opportunity to begin building more effective partnerships with voluntary and statutory agencies.

This is not only effective in enhancing our day- to-day delivery of services but in developing a strategic approach to homelessness and rough sleeping and housing supply in which shared objectives are agreed amongst partners.

Tailored Services for our residents

National statistics show that many of those facing homelessness are faced with episodes of poor mental health, drug, or alcohol problems as well as domestic violence. In addition, analysis shows that disproportionately high numbers of applications are from younger residents.

To reduce the pressure on temporary accommodation, targeted preventative work needs to be further extended in liaison with our Voluntary and Statutory partners.

Conversely, census information highlights the rise in the number of elderly people signalling a likely rise in demand for supported housing and care.

Accurate data collection

The review has confirmed areas of weakness in the collection of information regarding our homelessness service particularly with regards to issues of vulnerability. As well as putting the Council’s credibility at risk, providing inaccurate information about our services increases the risk of losing vital funding that would be used to provide prevention and relief services to our residents.

Purpose of this document

1.1 The purpose of this review is to shape Croydon's 2024-29 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy by examining:

- Current and future trends of homelessness and rough sleeping in Croydon using statistics collected by our housing needs services.
- Identifying any gaps or learning from the way we have provided services since our last review in 2018.
- Examine how our performance in homelessness and rough sleeping benchmarks against London Boroughs.

A summary of the review will be presented in the Strategy and a full version included as an appendix.

1.2 Based on the research, the Review will reach preliminary findings with a view to informing the completed strategy. We will then ask stakeholders for their comments and views on homelessness and rough sleeping in Croydon and whether the initial conclusions set out in the review are the right priorities for the next five years. This will involve the results of a consultation exercise which included a user survey, meetings with residents, voluntary groups, and statutory agencies.

A short Consultation report will then be produced summarising the views that have been expressed and any recommendations made.

1.3 Following this, the Final Strategy will be produced and agreed by Cabinet in April 2024.

1.4 Contact details for feedback/comments

If you are interested in contributing to this review, feedback can be provided in writing, by telephone or via the surveys and forms on our web site.

1.5 To provide feedback or comments please write to: Simon James, Change Manager, Transformation Programme, Croydon Council, Bernard Weatherill House, 8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA, or email simon.james@croydon.gov.uk

2 Background

2.1 Under the Homelessness Act 2002, local authorities are required to publish a homelessness strategy every five years to set out how it plans to deliver Homelessness and Sleeping services. This should contain an assessment of the extent of homelessness in the area and a consultation with public and local authorities, voluntary organisations as well as residents. Following this, a finalised Strategy will need to be agreed by Council Cabinet.

- 2.2 The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 represented the most significant change in Homelessness legislation for a generation. Most importantly, it included requirements for Local Authorities to assess all eligible applicants and take steps to prevent and relieve homelessness. It also extended the period that a household is threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days giving an emphasis to preventing homelessness at the earliest stage rather than waiting for an applicant having an immediate relief need. The need to fully respond to the requirements of this act is central to this Review.
- 2.3 In the Rough Sleeping Initiative 2018, the Government set out its strategy for eliminating rough sleeping by 2027 and halving it by the end of the Parliament (then thought to be 2021/22). In 2022, the strategy was refreshed with the Government committing to further investment that included £24.6 of the £37m commitment to tackling rough sleeping. Croydon's funding of £4.1m between 2022 and 2025 is critical to the delivery of the Council's programme to prevent rough sleeping.
- 2.4 The Mayors Business Plan sets the overall direction of the Council, and the Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy will link into its core objectives.

Outcome 4, Priority 3 of the Mayor's Plan

Prevent homelessness by providing advice, guidance, and appropriate support.

Review procurement of temporary accommodation for homeless people to obtain Value for Money.

- 2.5 The outcomes of the previous Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2022 were also considered. This set the following targets.
- Build 2,000 homes for Croydon residents.
 - Extend the Landlord Licensing Scheme after the first 5 years.
 - Buy 250 homes for families in need to be let at truly affordable rents.
 - Develop a strategic partnership with Crisis to develop our 10-year strategy to end homelessness.
 - Continue with our Housing First approach to get our most vulnerable rough sleepers off the streets.
 - Build on our Social Lettings Agency pilot in order to both encourage good landlords and to sustain tenancies.

During this period, the Council's financial position and the confinement of the Covid period meant that these objectives were not delivered and from May 2022 the Executive Mayor undertook to carry out a review of this service and produce a revised strategy with a greater emphasis on the prevention of homelessness as required by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

3 Demographic Context

Croydon is London’s most populated Borough, with approximately 390,800 residents (Census 2021). With a projected growth from 2022-2041 of 7.9% (GLA 2020 based housing led projections) Croydon’s age profile is therefore expected to become younger.

Figure 1 shows the breakdown of Croydon’s residents according to age.

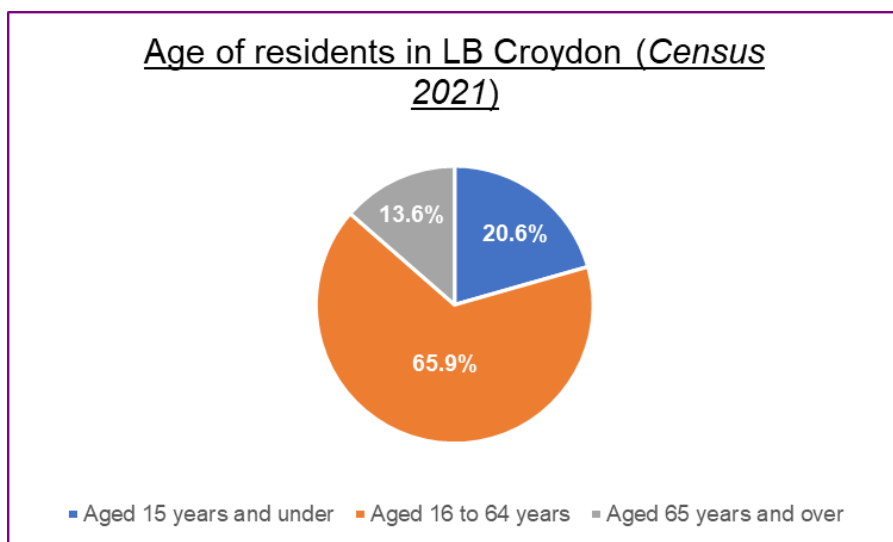


Figure 1

Nearly a quarter of Croydon’s population are aged 17 years and under, with Croydon having the highest number of 0–19-year-olds in London and the second highest 65+ year olds in London. Since 2011, Croydon has also

seen an ageing population, with a 19.6% growth in 65+ year olds (Census 2021)

Ethnicity

Government statistics in terms of the racial profile of those who were owed a Prevention or relief duty in the final quarter of 2022 showed the following.

%	London	Croydon	Rest of England
White	31%	26%	75%
Black	29%	45%	6%
Asian	12%	12%	5%

This demonstrates a disproportionate over representation of the Black community in terms of homelessness applications which are well above the London average.

Disability

In terms of disability in Croydon the 2021 census showed the following.

- That in Croydon 15.8% of residents were classified as disabled under the Equalities Act against a London average of 13.3%.
- When those with long term physical or mental health needs are added, this amounts to 19.6% of Croydon’s as compared with 18.5% of London’s population.

Elderly

Croydon also has an ageing population, since 2011 the borough has seen a 19.6% growth in the number of residents aged 65 years and over) and is now the second highest in London. The most-recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment suggests that the growing older population will lead to an increase in requirements for specialist housing solutions such as housing with support and care and care-bed spaces.

Deprivation

In terms of the deprivation index, Croydon is the 18th poorest out of 33 London boroughs (DCLG and Ordnance Survey (Crown Copyright)). and Croydon is the 97th most deprived local authority of 317 lower tier authority districts in England.

The most deprived areas in Croydon under the domain of health deprivation and disability are around the wards of Waddon, West Thornton, Selhurst, Thornton Heath, Addiscombe West, and New Addington South.

4 Housing Supply

4.1 Context

Falling supply

Croydon has the highest number of households in London, 152,900 (Census 2021). The ONS Census 2-21 data shows that the number of households in Croydon has increased by 5.4% in the last 10 years (145,010 to 152,900) with Council tax data suggesting this number is probably in excess of 160,000. Increases in overall stock are accounted for by growth in the private sector which has raised the amount of availability in the to let sector. Of the 152,900 households in Croydon, approximately, 9.7% rent their homes from Croydon Council with similar stock numbers held by Housing Associations and its proportion against all households has stayed the same (17.9%) over the last 10 years and is mainly concentrated in the northern parts and eastern edge of the borough. Nearly 14,000 properties are provided by Housing Associations with the largest being London and Quadrant, Hyde Housing, Clarion, Southern Housing and over 70 others, who make use of the Council's home choice register and place properties for advertising for rehousing and would then pay fees for this service.

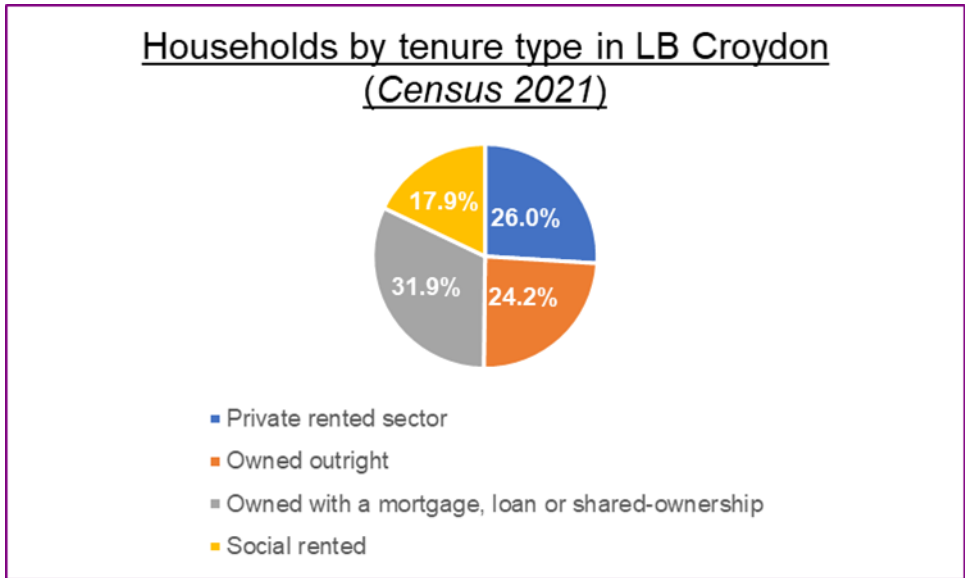


Figure 5

Census 2021 data shows us that most households in LB Croydon are one-person or two-person households (57.7% of households). Approximately 18.2% of households in the borough are 3-person households, and 24.1% of households are 4+ persons.

With up to 7,000 residents awaiting rehousing on the Housing register, the recent Strategic Housing Assessment 2023 (SHMA) has identified the need for over 1,200 additional ‘low cost’ rental homes per annum above current supply between now and 2040. It recommends the following mix of dwellings to meet future need within this category.

Bedroom size	%
1	15%
2	30%
3	35%
4	20%

In addition, with a projected 58% increase in the over 65 population, it is anticipated that up to the need for genuinely affordable accommodation 3,800 sheltered and extra-care accommodation will be needed between now and 2040.

Rising Need.

There are nearly 7,000 households on Croydon Council’s Housing Register which represents an increase of 5.9% since January 2022.

The average wait time for a Croydon Council property between 2016 and 2021 was five years and 11 months. Most households on the housing register are waiting for one-bedroom and two-bedroom properties.

Maximising the supply

The Council's financial position as well as the difficult national environment places restrictions on its role in providing the new affordable housing that the Borough needs. However, it will play a full part in setting a strategic direction which encourages local housing providers to engage in opportunities to increase their stock. Additionally, it will not miss opportunities to plan for future development in the area if this is financially prudent.

This is shown in the commitment to the regeneration of Regina Road underlying the long-term determination of the Council to improve the conditions our social housing residents are living in. Consequently, the Council will produce a Regeneration and New Homes Policy which sets out the ambition to improve existing stock as well as deliver the new homes that we need.

Managing the existing supply

Ensuring the effective supply of existing housing stock is a priority for the Housing Service. Effective policies for recovering and reservicing empty properties combined with policies that sustain tenancies are essential for maintaining supply and minimising evictions. Additionally, ensuring that nomination agreements with local housing associations are being maintained is also a factor in maintaining supply as well as introducing effective procurement processes for leasing private sector properties.

Private Sector housing

The Council recognises that a healthy private rented sector plays a vital role in providing good homes and will seek to work and support the many responsible landlords within our community.

Nationally, the role of private rental as a provider of housing has doubled since 2004 and in Croydon now account for 26% of Croydon households. Studies have shown however that increases in mortgage costs for those who buy to let, tax changes and a perception of increased governance (such as the Renter's bill) have all contributed to a minimum of 10% of Landlords withdrawing from the Market across London over the last year with projections that this will continue.

However, the Private rented sector is unaffordable to many Croydon residents increasing the demand for social homes and the pressure on the homelessness services. Rents in the sector are increasing with Croydon's average annual increase standing at 9.7% compared with the London average of 12% making it a target for other Boroughs seeking to procure cheaper temporary accommodation in the area.

In September 2019, Croydon Council commissioned a stock condition survey of the 54,000 private rental properties and data collected estimated that nearly a quarter of properties in the private sector had at least one serious hazard. Moreover, the report suggests that the private rented sector also faces issues with anti-social behaviour; between 2015 and 2019, 15,746 investigations have been conducted regarding nuisance in private rented sector properties.

In the same period the Council made 12,172 interventions in the Private Rental Sector with 1,307 housing and public health statutory notices being served on non-compliant Landlords. In the Housing Strategy 2023-28, the Council set out its intention to tackle the behaviour of irresponsible Private Landlords and the problems of poor housing conditions, high levels of deprivations, crime and anti-social behaviour that is sometimes associated with this form of tenure. This stated that if necessary, the Council will use the powers it has to improve the Borough's Private Rental Stock including consulting upon the introduction of a discretionary (including selective and additional houses in multiple occupation) licensing scheme(s).

Keeping people in their homes.

Nearly 58% of residents either own their homes outright or are paying a mortgage.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2023 shows that people who are elderly or who have a long-term health problem or disability are more likely to own their homes outright than the general population. It is important that these homes are adapted to meet the needs of those with long-term health problems or disabilities to prevent admission into supported housing, hospital, or residential care.

Croydon's 'Staying Put Service' helps people to remain living independently in their own home, through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for adaptations, and Home Investment Loans for essential repairs. It also provides a Hospital Discharge Service to facilitate safe discharges, as well as a Handyperson Service for minor work. In 2022/23, the Council distributed over £3m of DFG funding to the former and nearly £100,000 in loans for home improvements.

Making new housing available

Between 2019 and 2023, 524 units across 13 developments were provided through the Housing Revenue Account and the General Fund with rents set at London Affordable levels since 2021.

Most of these units were flats (215) and there were also 36 Maisonettes and 25 Houses. 204 of these properties were occupied from 2021/22.

Additionally, six other acquisitions were made as set out below

PROP SIZE	NUMBER OF UNITS – HRA/GENERAL FUND	OTHER GENERAL FUND/HRA ACQUISITIONS
1 bed	116	
2 beds	238	3
3 beds	162	2
4/5 bed	8	1 x 7 bed.

The Council also accepts the need to maintain the supply of existing stock through amongst other things, effective work in sustaining tenancies in the Private Sector.

Future Projections

- *On average, available council accommodation annually is around 400 dwellings a year - 50% one bed, 35% two bed and the remainder three or four bedroom.*
- *In the short term, an estimated 125 properties will be needed to decant Regina Road over the next 2 years.*
- *Between now and then supply of Croydon Council properties for homeless applicants is likely to fall by 15% over the next two years.*
- *Projected housing association voids per year are around 280 to 350 the majority being one or two beds.*
- *Increased demand for adapted and supported accommodation for elderly and disabled residents.*

Therefore, like many London Boroughs the provision of new housing is unlikely to keep up with demand over the period of the next Housing Strategy

PRIORITY ONE OBJECTIVES

Increasing Housing Supply.

1) Where possible promoting the increase of available housing

- Deliver the Regina Road programme by 2027 and maximise the opportunities offered by the disposal of land
- Explore future opportunities for housing in Croydon
- Work with Housing Associations to facilitate opportunities for development.
- Work to keep people in their Private Sector homes by improving conditions using selective or multiple licensing if necessary.

2) Managing the supply of properties.

- Sustaining tenancies by earlier intervention in preventing evictions in the social housing sector caused by rent arrears and anti-social behaviour.
- Ensuring effective reservicing of void properties in all tenures including Council and Housing Association properties.
- Enhancing nomination agreements with locally registered housing partners to ensure available stock is targeted towards those in temporary housing.
- More effective preventative work to limit the ending of tenancies by Private Sector Landlords as well as consideration of Landlord Licencing schemes.

5 Preventing Homelessness

The introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act placed emphasis on the avoidance of homelessness by extending the prevention duty to 56 days to encompass all those applying. Setting up a structure to deliver the objectives of the Act is a priority for the Council.

The table below compares the numbers being accepted for a relief duty in Croydon against other in London Boroughs in April 2022 to March 2023.

The HRA 2017 places a requirement on Councils adopting a preventative approach to Homelessness. When compared with other London Councils it appears from figures provided that those who have adopted this model are achieving better results in terms of homeless prevention although the numbers owed a relief duty have increased London wide.

2022/23	Prevention duty owed	Of which Owed relief duty	% owed relief duty
London-Wide	57,159	31,620	55%
Barking	1,299	550	42%
Ealing	2,958	1,242	41%
Greenwich	2,589	1,490	57%
Hackney	2,320	1,416	61%

An analysis of performance in Croydon in the calendar year 2022 showed the following;

- That of 2,272 cases owed a prevention duty, 1,500 cases or 66% were offered a relief duty suggesting a need to prioritise a more preventative approach to homelessness in Croydon.

In explaining this, many Boroughs have made changes to their structure to tailor their approach towards intervention. Although this comes at a time where homelessness is again on the rise it does appear that the greater concentration on homelessness prevention has had some effect.

Croydon Council has accepted that its service is not fit for purpose in terms of managing the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and has now implemented a new service structure. The restructure has recognised the need to equip staff with the mindset to act at the earliest stage to prevent homelessness occurring.

Analysis of 2022 data show the reasons for homelessness as follows;

- 28% owed a relief duty were asked to leave by family or friends against 36% London wide
- 13% of cases were Section 21 (ending of an AST tenancy) against 7% London wide. In March 2020, Croydon's figure stood at 12%.
- 5% of those presenting with a relief duty came from Social Housing which is the London average.

The finalised Strategy will set out the objective of tailoring our service to tackle the high level of Single Adults who are owed a relief.

Future projections

Figures available from London Councils show a 15- 20% overall rise in homelessness applications in London between March 2022 and March 2023. Soundings from other Local Authorities are that those figures have continued to increase at the same rate since then.

Preparing for this type of increase appears prudent especially as Croydon is at the upper end of homelessness applications amongst London Boroughs.

PRIORTY TWO OBJECTIVES

Preventing Homelessness

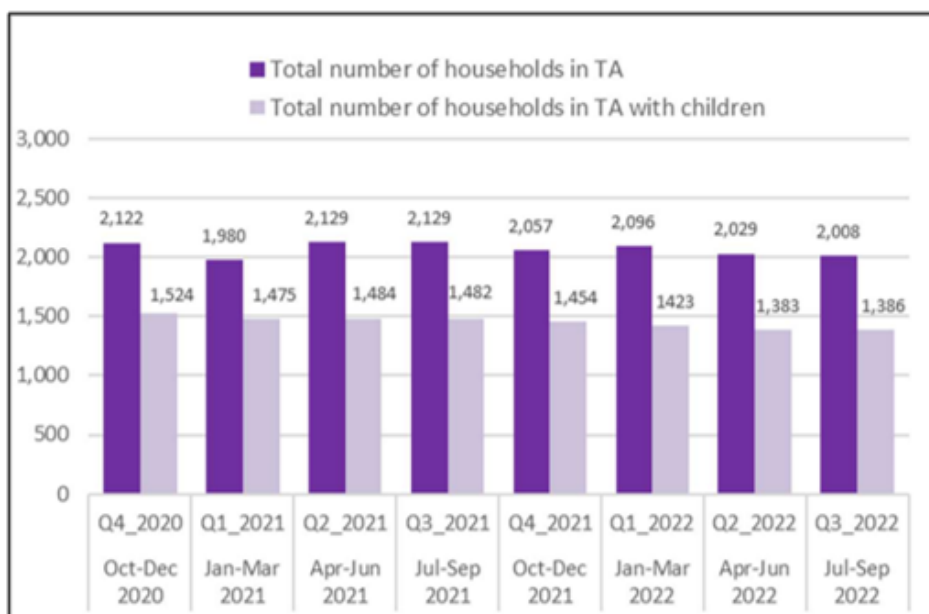
- To complete the re-organisation of the housing need's structure
- To fully implement the objectives of the Homelessness Reduction Act
- To reduce numbers of those found to be owed a relief duty to London norms.
- To prioritise prevention by tailoring our services towards tackling the causes of homelessness (see Objective 5)

6 Managing temporary housing and bed and breakfast more effectively.

This review comments upon information available from Croydon until December 2022 after which data was unavailable.

Over the past five years (2018-23) Croydon has had around 2,000 families consistently housed in temporary accommodation.

Figure 8 shows the last 8 quarterly snapshots of the total number of Croydon households that were accepted as homeless.



Source: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Table TA1, released Feb. 2023

Figure 8

In Croydon, as of December 31st, 2022, there were 1935 households in temporary accommodation. Of these households, 1359 had children living with them, with a total of 2589 children in temporary accommodation.

There were 144 households in bed and breakfast hotels, 406 were in nightly paid, privately managed, self-contained accommodation. 6 households were in hostels, 169 were in private sector accommodation leased by the Council, 409 were in Council housing stock and 801 were in another type of temporary accommodation.

Figure 10 shows the number of households in temporary accommodation by household composition (31st December 2022).

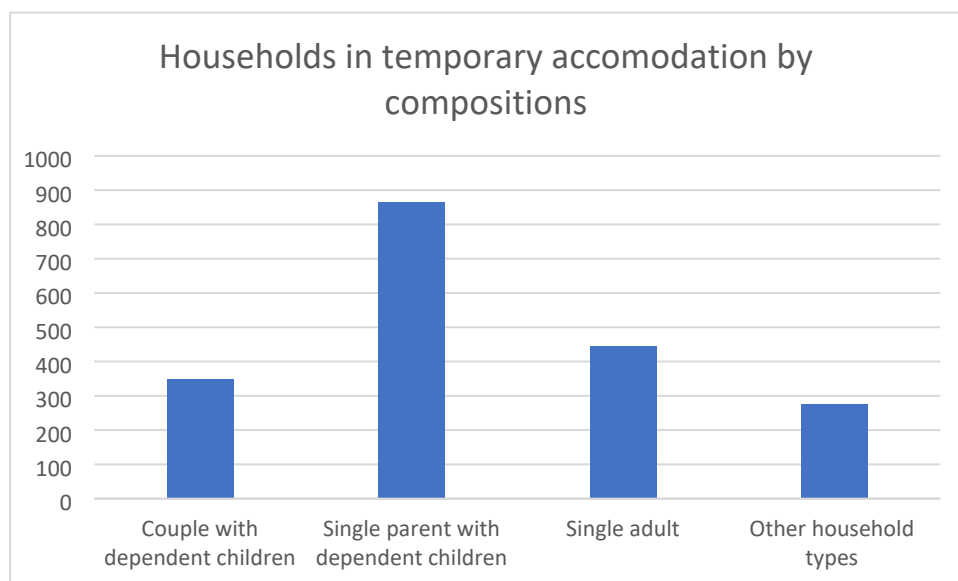


Figure 9

Reliance on Bed and Breakfast

A benchmark exercise comparing borough to borough usage of temporary housing between September and December 2022 amongst London Councils shows the following.

- Croydon has one of the highest number of residents in Bed and Breakfast amongst those benchmarked (though significantly no information was available from Lambeth, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Kensington and Chelsea).
- In Croydon, of 144 applicants in Bed and Breakfast, 43 had children and 22 had been there for longer than 6 weeks.
- Croydon had higher numbers in Bed and Breakfast than Lewisham, Camden, Islington, Haringey, Kingston and Hammersmith
- In comparison, Southwark had the highest number of cases in temporary accommodation at over 3,490 but 129 were in Bed and Breakfast ,24 with children and 9 over 6 weeks.

Accommodation outside the Borough

Most inner London Councils have increasingly had to seek temporary housing outside of their Borough because of the cost of procuring property and rising levels of demand in the private sector. By December 2022, of 57,490 residents in temporary accommodation, 23,890 (42%) were rehoused outside of the responsible Local Authority. The impact has been felt in Croydon, where many inner London Councils have now procured properties with the consequence of more locally based residents having to be displaced from their area.

The strategy towards resolving this problem lies in adopting a pan London approach towards agreeing a pricing framework for private sector accommodation which reduces the need for Boroughs to compete against each-other and the ability of Landlords and their agents to raise prices in a competitive environment.

Equally, the Council will need to develop effective and lasting local relationships with Private Sector Landlords to ensure a ready supply of properties. Through this mechanism the Council will seek to tackle the issue of poor quality of some temporary accommodation stock.

Temporary Housing not recorded in Government homelessness.

Figures presented in this report are generated from "H-Clic data" submitted to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities by all Councils. They represent the numbers of people who approach Croydon requesting a homelessness assessment accommodation.

However, Croydon has significantly higher numbers living in temporary accommodation including up to 500 care leavers and hundreds of residents rehoused from permanent for reasons such as over-crowding or disrepair. These residents have not completed a homelessness application and the Council is now putting this process in place which will increase number in temporary accommodation to around 3,000.

An audit of temporary stock use is currently taking place with a view to developing an exit strategy which will discharge the Councils duty to these residents.

Future projections

Nationally, numbers in Temporary Accommodation have continued to rise in the period of the review. In Quarter 1 2019/20 85,040 were in temporary accommodation but by Quarter 1 2023/24 this had risen to 104,510 up by 10,000 since Q1 2022/23. Further, as stated above, London Councils are reporting increases in the use of temporary accommodation.

In uncertain economic conditions and restrictions to housing supply this figure could again rise by 15 to 20% over the next 5 years.

PRIORTY THREE OBJECTIVES

Managing temporary housing and Bed and Breakfast more effectively.

- Set up a dynamic purchasing procurement arrangement with local Landlords to ensure good quality of temporary accommodation in the Private Sector.
- Work with boroughs through “London Councils” to develop a united approach to the procurement of temporary accommodation.
- To tackle the backlog of those housed in temporary housing who made no homeless application.

7 Rough Sleeping

“Croydon reach” a service procured through “Thames Reach” has been delivering a street homeless outreach service for rough sleepers in Croydon since January 2017. Prior to this, Croydon did not have a dedicated outreach service for rough sleepers, and it was estimated from average street counts that at this time around 72 people were rough sleeping.

The service is commissioned to deliver on two key areas;

- Shifts – patrolling the streets throughout the day but more predominantly throughout the night and making contact and offering help to people rough sleeping.
- Casework- leading on the process of a caseload of 60-70 rough sleepers on their ‘Route Away from The Street’ (RAFTS) into settled accommodation. Much of the casework work undertaken incorporates various aspects of statutory work the council would otherwise have to pick up via our statutory singles team (SHS) if this service was not operational.
- Of the 60 to 70 people, between 40 to 60 are worked with from the Street whilst the remainder include people being supported with in Emergency Accommodation.
- This aspect of the Rough Sleeping service costs £259,000 a year and is funded through Housing. It is due to be reprocured through an Open tender with the 3 years of funding being covered by Housing and Public Health.

7.1 Performance information for the service is collected through London Mayors Office and is known as CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and Information Network) and shows Croydon recording the highest numbers for Rough Sleeping amongst outer London Boroughs. The biggest KPI for these outreach services measure how many nights a rough sleeper slept out – Achieving ‘no second night out’ being the goal. The table below shows a breakdown in Q4 22-23 of the 83 new rough sleepers achieving no second night out in the Southwest London region. Of the 83 recorded, 50 of those resettled by the second night were from

Croydon showing the Council is placing more rough sleepers after one night than the rest of entire subregion combined.

7.2 The table below sets out performance amongst south-west boroughs with regards to Rough Sleeping between January and March 2023.

CHAIN QUARTERLY REPORT | SOUTH WEST LONDON BOROUGHs | JAN-MAR 23

South West London Boroughs: Distribution

BOROUGH	New RS with no second night out	New RS with a second night out but not living on the streets	New RS joining living on the streets population	LOS - Known	LOS - RS205+	Intermittent rough sleeper	TOTAL
Croydon	50	12	0	4	0	23	89
Kingston upon Thames	5	2	0	11	0	17	35
Merton	11	0	0	0	0	1	12
Richmond	3	4	1	1	0	10	19
Sutton	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Wandsworth	13	1	0	8	0	24	46
UNIQUE TOTAL	83	19	1	24	0	75	202

7.3 Figures demonstrate the split of service users of rough sleeping services according to age. The largest proportion of service users are aged between 26-45.

Age Group	% split of total Service users
18 - 25	9%
26 - 35	28%
36 - 45	28%
46 - 55	24%
55+	10%

Figure 13 (Chain 2022/23 Data)

- Of the rough sleepers assessed in the borough between 2022/23 ,73% (273 out of 373) were new to rough sleeping whilst 15% (57 of 373) remained living on the streets.
- Of those whose gender was known, 299 were male and 68 were female.
- Where a case history was taken, Croydon saw 81 out of 252 rough sleepers as having formerly been in either the armed forces, care or prison.
- Of 373 rough sleepers assessed, 94 were black, 99 were white British, 84 were white other and 28 were Asian.

- 77% (191 out of 246) had additional support needs such as substance misuse or mental health issues. This figure excludes people for whom none of the three support needs were known or assessed.

7.4 A further analysis carried out of figures produced in Q3 2023/24 pointed to an increase of 90 rough sleepers in South-West London boroughs from 202 in Q4 2022/23 to 292. Of these 143 identified were from Croydon and 149 in the five boroughs listed in the table above.

- In Croydon, of 143, 94 were newly identified as rough sleepers and 78 had no 2nd night out.
- In terms of the 149 identified in the five South-West Boroughs, 76 were new rough sleepers of which 56 spent no 2nd night out.

In terms of achieving the 2nd night out target despite having amongst the highest number of rough sleepers amongst outer London Boroughs, Croydon's performance in this area remains strong with over 80% of identified rough sleepers achieving this target.

7.5 Figures suggest that despite the offer of support in moving away from homelessness there is a section of rough sleepers (up to 15%) who remain in a cycle of homelessness. Much of this could be attributed to problems such as drugs and alcohol or mental health. It is recognised that amongst this group, there are people causing anti-social behaviour and engaging in drugs and alcohol abuse which is regularly causing disturbance. To tackle this, the Rough Sleeping services will liaise with the Safer Streets group to prioritise interventions with rough sleepers in the borough who may be involved in aggressive begging, street drinking and taking drugs in public.

7.6 **Future Projections**

Anecdotal evidence suggests that Rough Sleeping is on the rise across London and in Croydon. Despite the relative success of the No 2nd Night Out programme, it is prudent to plan for a 10% to 15% increase in rough sleeping over the course of the Housing Strategy.

The lack of short stay/supported accommodation combined with reduced move on opportunities will increase the difficulties in placing rough sleepers.

PRIORITY FOUR OBJECTIVES

Rough Sleeping

- Re-procure the street outreach services and bed in the new service.
- Maintain performance on the "No Second Night Out" objective.
- Where necessary take enforcement action in liaison with anti-social behaviour services against rough sleepers who refuse offers of assistance and engage in anti-social activities.
- Explore more move on opportunities for rough sleepers.
- Access more suitable accommodation.

8 Targeted services and working with Partners

As set out in this review, the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 means that a range of interventions are needed to prevent homelessness. This will mean increasing our work in tackling some of the causes of homelessness such as drugs and alcohol abuse, mental health issues and domestic abuse.

This will entail extending upon our partnership work in the Voluntary and Statutory sector and to continue working with voluntary agencies;

Examples of this have included

- Elite Housing and Support who provide semi-independent accommodation and housing related support to young people aged 16-21 and, in some circumstances, up to 25 with the aim of developing resilience and confidence in young people
- Evolve Housing provide a supported housing service for those who are under 25 in Croydon and other Boroughs,
- Crisis in Croydon support those who have been or are homeless and provide individually tailored advice and coaching sessions.
- Family Justice Centre or FJC provide a multi-disciplinary approach for victims of abuse and sexual violence and assess those who have made a homelessness application on the grounds of domestic abuse (see below)
- The Housing Needs Service works with the Public Health and Alcohol team particularly with Rough Sleepers when tackling issues of drugs and alcohol.
- An Officer is now employed to deal with homelessness applications coming from those in hospital. The Review accepts the importance of this issue for Adult Services and Health Services who are reporting that the Housing Service is not responsive.

Care Experienced Young people.

Figures reported in June 2023 reported that there are 458 care leavers housed in temporary private sector accommodation by the Council. These were not linked to a homelessness application and therefore not included in quarterly returns submitted to Government. This has now been rectified with these numbers contributing to a rise in homelessness cases to around 3,000. Further, Local Housing Allowance was linked to 90% of the 2011 rate meaning the Council were required to heavily subsidise the cost. The uncertainty and unsuitability of some of this accommodation meant many Care-Experienced Young People experienced poor mental health and well-being, often felt unsafe with many facing economic challenges.

Housing and Childrens Social Services have now committed to a Joint Protocol which is intended to deliver upon the Government's expectation that a stronger safety net is provided for Care leavers threatened with homelessness.

This will involve a tailored pathway plan with identified support being prepared for every Care leaver and the choice of the following housing options.

- Supported Living
- Supported Housing Accommodation
- Private Rented Accommodation
- Social Housing

The routine use of Emergency Accommodation would be phased out in all, but the most urgent cases and the process would be used to identify suitable pathways for those carers who were in Emergency Accommodation.

In summary, the Council accepts that it now needs to reset its relationships within the local Statutory and Voluntary Sector and is intent on taking a leadership role by setting up a Homelessness Forum which will take place quarterly and involve key partners in discussing the Borough's strategy in reducing homelessness.

Family Justice Centre

The Family Justice Centre has continued to provide a responsive service despite threefold rises in reports of domestic abuse since 2017. Increased joint working including co-location of staff will be a recommendation of the strategy.

Future Projections

When considering the need for targeted support for the causes of homelessness the following national figures are considerations

1. *The rise in those presenting for reasons of Mental Health - Up from 56,980 in 2018/19 to 72,960 in 2021/22*
2. *The rise in domestic abuse claimants from 23,920 in 2018/19 to 32,600 in 2021/22*
3. *Increases in drug and alcohol dependency from 25,260 in 2018/19 to 30,540 in 2021/22.*

These upward figures may well have been affected by the Covid period but further increases of 10%-15% could be likely over the period of the next housing strategy.

PRIORITY FIVE OBJECTIVES

Targeted Services and Working with Partners

- Deliver the Joint Protocol for Care Experienced Young people.
- Development a local partnership through the Statutory and Voluntary Sector with the aim of engaging with an already existing forum or setting up a Boroughwide Homelessness Forum
- Review the collation of information relating to homelessness and care needs to ensure accurate reporting.
- Extend local preventative work in combating homelessness by developing upon established relationships.
- Set up clear communication and pathways to housing for our partner health services at South London and Maudsley NHS Trust (SLAM) and Croydon Hospital.

