

Follow-up Written Answers from Overview and Scrutiny Committee 20 January 2022

Agenda Item 4

People Portfolio Holder updates

Question 1 - Use of private sector – Members asked how many homeless households were assisted into private sector accommodation and what the proportion was in the Borough compared to using social housing. It was noted that due to the lack of social housing, the Council had to use the private rented sector and assist tenants applying for help with housing benefits and to secure deposits and rents in advance. The Head of Housing would follow-up the numbers in the private sector with a written answer. The Council placed more people in the private rental sector than the social rental sector.

Written Answer

- 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 (12 months): 217 households assisted into new homes within the private rented sector to avoid homelessness & 46 households housed into social or supported housing to avoid homelessness
- 1 April 2021 – 31 December 2021 (9 months): 155 households assisted into new homes within the private rented sector to avoid homelessness & 31 households housed into social or supported housing to avoid homelessness

Question 2

Asylum Seekers and Refugees – Members asked for further information on the legal definitions and differences between Asylum Seekers and Refugees. The Head of Housing would provide more details in a follow-up written response.

Written Answer

Asylum seekers

A person seeking asylum:

- flees their home
- arrives in another country, whichever way they can
- makes themselves known to the authorities
- submits an asylum application
- has a legal right to stay in the country while waiting for a decision.

Refugees

A refugee:

- has proven that they'd be at risk if returned to their home country
- has had their claim for asylum accepted by the government
- has permission to stay in the UK either long term or indefinitely.
- Refugees have a right under UK and international law to bring their immediate family members to join them.