

People

Portfolio Updates



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Housing & Support update


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Homeless statistics 2022/23 (estimated Q4)

	<u>22/23</u>	<u>21/22</u>	<u>20/21</u>
• Homeless Approaches:	1336	1137	1098
• Owed a 'Prevention duty':	252	268	295
• Owed a 'Relief duty':	227	189	236
• Positive Outcomes:	329	297	345
• Main duty Acceptances:	63	55	47
• Average number in B&B:	38	34	32
• Affordability approaches:	607	587	n/a



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- **Approaches** = Contacts from households requiring advice or assistance: You will note an increase of almost 200 (18% increase over previous year), this is not a surprise due to the ever increasing challenges around finding & securing affordable accommodation and households being able to maintain their accommodation during a worsening cost of living crisis that the country is experiencing.
- **Prevention duty** = Households threatened with homelessness within 56 days and required case working. This figure has fallen slightly and this is probably linked to the 'Relief duty' figure (below).
- **Relief duty** = Households that are actually homeless, (many will have unsuccessfully been through the 'Prevention' period). This figure is now higher than pre covid periods (after the statistical 'blip' of the Government's 'Everyone In' directive). Pre covid we accepted the Relief duty to around 170–180 households. This latest increase reflects the cost of living crisis, high cost of housing locally, some Ukrainian presentations from both the Family and Homes for Ukrainian's schemes as well as presentations from local Home Office Asylum Seeker sites.
- **Positive outcomes** = Households that avoided homelessness through case work, were either able to remain in their original accommodation or were assisted into alternative accommodation. Surprisingly the team have managed a higher number of positive outcomes this year which helpfully supports the increased number of applicants. Although it is proving harder to secure affordable private rented accommodation and suitable accommodation for many of our single homeless

cohort, with increased access to grant, this has been utilised in many cases for rent in advance and deposit for applicants.

- **Main duty acceptance** = Unable to prevent or relieve homelessness by the end of 56 day relief and prevention periods. RBBC had a duty to secure permanent accommodation. Continued increase over recent years expect this trend to increase as higher number of households present as homeless and it becomes harder to source and secure affordable housing options.
- **Average number in B&B:** Continued increase with the average number of households in B&B each night, again this is to be expected as cases become more complex and it becomes harder to secure move on accommodation for applicants (both temporary and permanent). Expect this to increase as the cost of living 'bites' households further.
- **Affordability approaches:** The number of homeless approaches that advise that they are facing homelessness due to affordability issues

Housing Register - (22/23 estimated Q4)

	<u>22/23</u>	<u>21/22</u>	<u>20/21</u>
• Nominations to social tenancies:	294	196	255
• No. of households on list at 31/12:	1213	1153	1186
• 87 new build rented properties nominated to in first 3 quarters			
• 963 applications received			
• 401 applications accepted			
• 688 applications rejected			

- The number of vacant social / affordable rented properties available to nominate to is nearer pre Pandemic levels, although only due to 87 new builds across 4 developments. Wheatley Ct Redhill (RBBC), Athena Hse Horley (Rosebery HA), Somerville Cres Redhill (Aster) & Westvale Horley (Sage)
- The number of households on the Housing Register is not increasing as expected . Note the high volume of applications staff have to assess, the high number of applications rejected (mainly due to not fitting the criteria or not completing the application process in full). Other applicants are removed from the list when they fail to respond to yearly renewal contacts.
- There are only 2.5 officers working on the Housing Register.

Challenges *(no particular order)*

- Continued shortage of rented homes that are affordable (social and private sectors) especially larger family homes
- possible impact of the Renters Reform Bill
- Lack of housing for homeless single people with complex needs
- Shortage of local nightly paid B&B accommodation

Highlights

- Staff preventing homelessness for almost nearly 330 households
- The opening of Wheatley Court, RBBC's development of 32 social rented flats
- RBBC's development of 4 single person units in Horley and 2 new flats purchased by Transform Housing, assisted by capital funding from RBBC, SCC Public Health & Homes England, all 6 units for complex single homeless applicants.
- Continued success with grant funding applications

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Slide 5

Challenges:

Continued joint working with planning colleagues to secure as much affordable housing as possible on new sites – this is an even greater challenge now than ever before due to the widely reported increase in build costs at a time when new schemes (especially affordable housing units) are expected to be zero carbon by the Registered Providers purchasing the homes from developers.

'Affordable rents (80% market rent)' on the larger homes (3 & 4 beds, especially in north of borough) not being affordable to those on the waiting list. Actively looking at schemes with RP partners to provide 'social rents (60% market rents)' whenever possible.

Homeless families are backing up in EA & TA due to the lack of vacant larger social tenancies.

Joint working with statutory and third sector partners around the lack of suitable supported accommodation for the single and complex need cohort

Renters Reform Bill on route through Parliament – Proposals include, scrapping section 21 'no fault' evictions, creating a register of landlords, introducing a private rented ombudsman to help enforce renters' rights, making it illegal for landlords and agents to refuse to rent properties to people who receive benefits and give local authorities more power to enforce and protect renters' rights

Some of these challenges are being addressed through projects shared on next slide.

Grant Funding successes this year:

- £294,031 RSI (Rough Sleeper Initiative) This is to be paid over 3 year (2022-25) and is for the salary of a prison resettlement worker managed by eSOS for RBBC, EA money and personal budgets.
- £636,036 East Surrey RSI , again paid over 3 years 2022/25. Joint bid by the 4 LA's, this will fund some EA, 3 eSOS outreach posts and some personal budgets
- £79,200 Accommodation for Offenders , paid over 2 years 2023-25 to secure private rented accommodation for up to 24 homeless offenders
- Standard yearly grant: £679,016 Homeless Prevention Grant announced for 2022/23 (used for salaries of 5x Hsg Staff, 1x Fraud Officers, 2x Money Support Officers, ESOS and other homeless prevention work
- £107,780 Homeless Prevention Grant top up.

Projects

- Increase the amount of RBBC owned emergency accommodation
- Increase the amount of RBBC owned temporary accommodation
- Purchase new rent accounting software to aid the management of RBBC properties and B&B accounts
- Trail a scheme to assist with local social housing tenants that wish to downsize from under occupied homes to free up family homes for homeless households

- Increasing the amount of RBBC owned EA & TA will allow a more cost efficient and better quality 'in borough' solution for homeless applicants. Paper agreed at Executive in October 2022 on the capital spend of £4m. Two properties under offer at the time of writing.
- The current rent account software is not fit for purpose and is unsupported, a new system will allow better rent collection, reporting and add to the improved offer to applicants. New software being tested with expectation that it will go live by 1 April 2023.
- Downsizer Scheme paper going to Executive in January 2023.

Asylum Seekers – Home Office accommodation

- Skylane Hotel, Horley: Initial Accommodation for 93 males
- Four Points Hotel, Horley: Initial Accommodation for 146 males
- Cambridge Hotel, Horley: Initial Accommodation for 118 males
- Bridge House Hotel, Reigate: Initial Accommodation for 35 males
- Quadrant House, Redhill: Overflow Dispersal Accommodation for about 65 women, most have one child
- Home Office recently consulted re using a house in Horley as Overflow Dispersal Accommodation for 7 adults
- Largest impact on local services sits with Health colleagues including maternity / new mother services and GP services.
- We are also now receiving a number of homeless applications from the cohort at Quadrant House as they receive leave to remain in the UK as well as a few now coming from the Four Points Hotel

- Initial Accommodation (Hotels) is Home Office accommodation for Asylum Seekers when they first arrive in the UK
- Overflow Dispersal Accommodation (QH) is Home Office accommodation for those moving out of Initial Accommodation, whilst waiting for Dispersal Accommodation, unless they are given their Home Office Immigration decision whilst in QH or now IA. If they receive a positive decision they can apply as homeless to a Local Authority where they have a Local Connection, which includes RBBC due to them living in the borough in IA or ODA. These applications take an increased amount of staff time and cost more because an interpreter has to be arranged and funded for each contact.
- RBBC included in regular statutory, partnership and third sector agencies meetings covering most aspects of these five+ Home Office sites

Revenue, Benefits & Fraud update

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Benefits Service

Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support

- From Q1 to Q3 in 2022/23, we dealt with 1,532 new applications for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support, compared with 1,326 over the same period in 2021/22
- From Q1 to Q3 in 2022/23, we dealt with 25,296 changes in circumstances for benefit claims, compared with 29,758 over the same period in 2021/22
- The Housing Benefit expenditure is forecast at £26.5m for 2022/23, compared with £26.6m in 2021/22, with government subsidy covering around 96% of this cost. An increase in non-subsidised elements of the scheme, such as high rent supported accommodation, continue to have a negative impact on the subsidy level we receive
- Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) provides reductions to around 5,000 households on their Council Tax bills. These reductions total £7.8m (2022/23), shared between preceptors (Surrey County Council and Surrey Police)

Benefits Service

Discretionary Housing Payments

- Discretionary Housing Payments – funding for 2022/23 was reduced to £182,823 compared to £257,948 in 2021/22. The payments are to assist with rental costs and prevent homelessness. As at 31/12/22 we had paid or allocated 76% of the government funding
- Any overspend must be met by the Council, whereas any unspent funds are returned to the Department for Work and Pensions

Council Tax Support Fund

- This new scheme will provide all recipients of Local Council Tax Support, up to an additional £25 credit to their Council Tax account in 2023/24, to help with the increases in the cost of living

Household Support Fund

- The service supported the activities under this fund, making payments of £110 to 1,705 pensioner households

Benefits Service

COVID-19 Pandemic Pressures and Support

- The Council was responsible for administering Test & Trace Payments to residents who had been told to self-isolate. The scheme ran from September 2020 to the end of April 2022

Energy Support Payments

- From April to November 2022, payments of £150 were paid to eligible households to assist with the rise in energy prices –
- £5.2m was paid to 35,012 eligible households
- In January 2023 LAs will be supporting the government to roll out payments to households under the “Energy Bill Support Scheme – Alternative Funding”. Volumes are unknown at present, but we are expecting these payments to reach approximately 2,000 households

Intervention update:

Family Support Programme, Refugee
Resettlement, Money Support Team

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Intervention: Family Support Programme

- We have received 131 referrals this year – a slight increase in comparison to last year
 - Wait times have increased to 6 weeks
- Family complexity continues to increase, with workers needing to spend more time supporting families.
 - The average length of intervention is now 16 weeks
- Families note the most change through working with the service in their wellbeing, boundaries and behaviours and meeting emotional needs
- 73% of families note a positive change in their wellbeing through working with the Family Support Programme

Work on behalf of 3 councils

Intervention: Money Support Team

- Referrals have increased from the previous year
 - 2022 – 237 referrals
 - 2021 – 209 referrals
 - 2020 – 265 referrals (*covid increase*)
- Length of intervention remains on average 6-7 weeks
 - Impact of Universal Credit, Cost of Living Crisis and Fuel Poverty are the biggest three impacting referral numbers this year.
- Clients note the most change in their income & benefits and their wellbeing

Intervention: Refugee Resettlement (Syrian Scheme)

- No new arrivals this year
 - Commitment target already reached
- Continuing to support 6 households across RBBC
 - Funding for support remains in places until 2024
- All adults and children are positively engaging in support to ensure their independence
- Syrian Feast event hosted in October
 - Over 138 people attended
 - Recipe book has now sold 198 copies
 - Funds raised used to directly support families

Work on behalf of 3 councils

Agreement to resettle more families over next 5 years

Syrian Feast

Intervention: Refugee Resettlement (Afghanistan Scheme)

- Welcomed 3 household to the Borough in 2022
 - This fulfils our commitment to this scheme
 - Support remains in place until 2025
- All adults and children are positively engaging in support to ensure their independence
- RBBC running the scheme for South East Surrey councils (as with the Syrian Scheme)

Intervention: Refugee Resettlement (Ukrainian Schemes)

Since April 2022:

- 297 Ukrainian guests have arrived in the borough
- Every ward in the Borough has welcomed a Ukrainian into their community
- 30 guests have been supported to move into Private Rented Accommodation
- 17 guests have returned to Ukraine
- We have supported 23 guests to move to live with a new sponsor (at the end of their initial accommodation offer)

Leisure & Culture update

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Leisure: GLL

- Positive operational delivery for GLL across all three centres.
 - Full management contract fees re introduced including inflationary rise as per contract
- Improved customer confidence in the sector
 - Membership numbers have risen across all three centres in 2022
 - Tadworth up 15% across the Year
 - Donyngs up 11%
 - Horley up 11%
- Partnership of Ideal Leisure Standards for Care leavers
 - County led project to standardise across the County
 - GLL supporting and funding any access

Leisure: Leisure Development

- School holiday programme ran it's full programme for 2022
 - Mixture of free and paid for activities
 - 63 activities or sessions run in 2022
 - More families seeking activities aimed at children during school holidays
- Continuation of 'Play Ranger' activities in Easter and Summer
 - dedicated staff and volunteers supporting children to play out in their own streets and parks
 - 5 locations – Merstham Recreation Ground, Horley Recreation Ground, Reigate Priory Park, Banstead Lady Neville Park, Redhill Memorial Park
- Return of Surrey Youth Games
 - Over 50 children trained for 10 weeks in a sporting discipline
 - 6 different sports represented Judo, Dance, Basketball, Tennis, Swimming and Go Tri
 - 30 children represented RBBC at the Youth Games
- Star for a Night
 - 8 Weeks free tuition in Acting Singing and Dancing
 - Two Shows at the Harlequin Theatre
 - 46 participants in the shows

What are we trying to achieve?

Raise awareness of affordable and accessible activities and facilities in the borough.

Give residents the confidence to take part on their own and have fun in their community.

Improve physical and mental wellbeing and develop lifelong activity habits.

Year	Attendance	Activities
2019	643	38
2021	472*	20

*including Play rangers attendance of 237

Leisure: Harlequin Theatre

- Year of two halves with customer confidence
 - January – May slow return to live theatre and Cinema June – December normal customer traits returned
 - Positive return to Café reflected in visitor number increase
- Busy year of shows
 - 236 live shows & events
 - Screened 123 films
- Return of Outdoor Theatre this Summer
 - 5 live unique events (compared to 1 last year)
 - 1175 customers attended
- Pantomime was extremely successful, both financially and reputationally
 - 43 shows welcome over 17 000 customers
 - Use of Waller Studio for live theatre The Night Before Christmas
- Harlequin performed jubilee, Proclamation and Civic duties in 2022
- Completed the refit of the Studio to be able to host live arts events, rather than just films

Leisure: Future focus

- Finalise the Leisure & Culture Strategy
- Continue to reduce financial subsidy level
 - Harlequin visitor numbers to increase & expand reach to neighbouring areas
 - Increased programming of events at The Harlequin
- Building improvement projects to improve customer experience at Harlequin
- Continuation of growth of School Holiday activities and Sport development activities
- Growth of Outdoor Theatre plan 10 -15 live shows
- Culture week (a programme of activities aimed at Arts culture)
- Long term view about the operation of our Leisure Centres
- Introduction of Arts development officer
 - Develop & deliver events aimed at supporting Mental health & Wellbeing
 - Funded by Surrey Heartlands