



# **Southampton Strategic Assessment**

## **Homelessness Prevention Review**

*Last Updated June 2018*



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## 1. Introduction

Homelessness prevention is key to developing an effective response to the problem of homelessness within Southampton. Local authorities have a long-standing responsibility to help homeless households, but the Homelessness Act 2002 imposed a further duty on them to develop strategies to prevent homelessness arising<sup>1</sup>. Local authorities must develop a review which sets out the levels, and likely future levels of homelessness in their district. This should include any activities which the local authority are contributing to preventing homelessness, securing accommodation or supporting the needs of the people in their district.

Moreover, the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 requires local authorities to provide or secure the provision of free services to give people in their area information and advice on preventing homelessness. It also requires local authorities to help people to secure accommodation if homeless or likely to become homeless in the future<sup>2</sup>.

### 1.1 Scope of review

The purpose of this review is to better understand homelessness in Southampton and determine the extent to which the population in the district is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This review will inform the Southampton Homeless Prevention Strategy.

The review will consider current and future levels of homelessness in Southampton based on:

- Existing casework records and other local sources of data;
- Trends in homelessness approaches and in underlying causes;
- Which cohorts may be more likely to become homeless or be threatened with homelessness;
- The profile of households who have experienced homelessness in their district;
- Equality monitoring data, including that relating to homelessness applications and outcomes;
- The range of factors that may affect future levels of homelessness;
- The personal and structural factors that may contribute to people becoming homeless;
- Any planned legislation or local policy changes that are likely to impact on levels of homelessness for particular groups in the district.

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<sup>1</sup> Shelter England (2007). *Homelessness Prevention* [Online]. Available from: [http://england.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/policy\\_and\\_research/policy\\_library/policy\\_library\\_folder/homelessness\\_prevention](http://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_and_research/policy_library/policy_library_folder/homelessness_prevention) [Accessed 11 May 2018].

<sup>2</sup> The charter Institute of Housing (2017). *What you need to know about the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017* [Online]. Available from: <http://www.cih.org/resources/PDF/Policy%20free%20download%20pdfs/What%20you%20need%20to%20know%20Homelessness%20Reduction%20Act%202017.pdf> [Accessed 11 May 2018].

## 2. Context

This review comes at a time when the extent of homelessness across England is increasingly challenging. The term “homeless” includes those who are statutory homeless, people who are rough sleeping and sofa surfers, all of whom are referred to separately within this report. For full definitions see Appendix C. At any one time there are as many as 4,750 people sleeping rough on the streets of England, and more than 78,000 households, including over 120,000 children, are housed by Local Authorities in temporary homelessness accommodation. In addition, there are believed to be high numbers of ‘hidden homeless’ people who are housed by family and friends in shifting circumstances, but not always captured as part of the official figures<sup>3</sup>.

Homelessness has increased nationally and since 2010 the number of households in temporary accommodation has increased by more than 60%; since March 2011 the number of people who sleep rough has risen by 134%. Underpinning these upward trends are the various causes of homelessness, of which, the most important remains the supply and affordability of decent housing in the South East and South of England. Over the last few years there has been a noticeable rise in London boroughs now having to place families outside of London<sup>4</sup>.

Southampton has not been immune to these national developments. Southampton’s recorded street count of people who are sleeping rough, which was independently verified, whilst remaining lower than many South Coast cities has risen between 2010 and 2017 (see Figures 3.1.4 and 3.1.5 for further information). In addition, although Southampton has good systems and pathways in place for homeless families, such as the Street Homeless Prevention Team, Day Centre support services and pathways for housing through Patrick House, Southampton City Council (SCC) has seen a reduction in homeless preventions in part due to shortages of private landlords. Some families in the city have seen significant income shocks, associated with welfare reforms such as the Benefit Cap, frozen Local Housing Allowances and delays associated with initial payments under Universal Credit. This is resulting in debt and people are relying more and more on friends and families for help.

Against this backdrop of increasing levels of homelessness across the country, the Government has introduced new legislation. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017<sup>5</sup> will bring with it new ways of working and new methods of recording homelessness, enabling the provision of more homelessness advice and assistance. The new Act will involve staff working with clients on joint housing and relief plans, in addition to helping some households find work or increasing hours. Regrettably, however,

<sup>3</sup> The Guardian (2018). *Rough sleeper numbers in England rise for seventh year running* [Online]. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/jan/25/rough-sleeper-numbers-in-england-rise-for-seventh-year-running> [Accessed 11 May 2018].

<sup>4</sup> BBC News (2017). *Homeless families rehoused out of London ‘up five-fold’* [Online]. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-39386587> [Accessed 11 May 2018].

<sup>5</sup> Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, [Online]. Available from: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/contents/enacted> [Accessed 11 May 2018].

supplies of affordable housing within the South are limited<sup>6</sup>, and reducing the number of households in priority need and people who are sleeping rough will be an increasingly difficult challenge.

## 2.1 Impact of Welfare Reform

The largest and most ambitious welfare reform over the past few decades has been the gradual implementation of Universal Credit. Universal Credit is a single monthly payment for people of working age that replaced six existing benefits – housing benefit, child tax credit, income support, working tax credit, income-based job seeker's allowance and income related employment and support allowance (ESA). It is paid monthly in arrears to people aged 16 and over who are in employment, or who are out of work and looking for a job.

Universal Credit may have had some potential impacts on homelessness, such as:

1. Claimants must wait six weeks or longer before they receive their first monthly payment. This includes a seven-day period, so called 'waiting days', when many claimants do not qualify for any money.
2. Benefit Offices have struggled with the roll-out of Universal Credit in regards to paying claimants on time each month. Department for Work and Pension figures show that 96% of Universal Credit claimants receive some money on time and 92% receive everything they are owed on time. However, among new claimants, just 85% of households receive some money on time and only 76% receive full payment on time.
3. Social landlords claim that rent arrears among tenants are increasing due to universal credit. One Housing Trust based in North West England has reported that its rent arrears have risen by £400,000 in the past 12 months due to Universal Credit.
4. The switch from fortnightly payments to monthly payments which may be impacting families who have difficulty managing a monthly budget.
5. The use of advancement payments whilst waiting for Universal Credit to start, which has been described as too small and are generally paid back over the course of six months through deductions from Universal Credit causing further debt<sup>7</sup>.

National research by four leading homelessness and housing charities (Centre Point, Homeless Link, Shelter, St Mungo's) revealed certain case studies where vulnerable people who were switched to

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<sup>6</sup> Independent (2016). *England's 50 worst homelessness hotspots revealed as study finds 255,000 people have no permanent home* [Online]. Available from: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homelessness-england-numbers-shelter-study-worst-city-hotspots-london-manchester-rate-rough-sleeping-a7448521.html> [Accessed 11 May 2018].

<sup>7</sup> Shelter et al (2017). *Homelessness and Universal Credit* [Online]. Available from: <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Briefing%20on%20Universal%20Credit%20and%20homelessness%20Sept%202017.pdf> [Accessed 11 May 2018].

Universal Credit were left for over ten weeks with no payment made, due to the 6 week wait and errors from the Department of Work and Pensions<sup>8</sup>. This caused significant hardship, and one claimant had to borrow money from friends and at times went without meals. Having no income meant that rent arrears quickly built up and the claimant's landlord was in the process of eviction. The claimant also received an advancement payment five weeks after the original Universal Credit application was made, which then had to be paid back at £52.40 per month once Universal Credit was in payment, which caused further hardship and added to the risk of eviction.

Further research highlighted that many people who are homeless, or have been homeless, have a difficulty with managing a monthly budget, particularly when a change in circumstances has led to a new Universal Credit claim, as well as the setbacks this has on recovering from homelessness. This is a particular problem as Universal Credit is paid monthly. Homelessness charities have presented many examples of individuals who struggle with monthly budget planning as being one key risk in jeopardising a person's recovery from homelessness, especially those with mental health conditions and substance misuse problems.

The implementation of the benefit cap could also affect homelessness as it imposes a limit on the total amount of benefits that most people aged 16–64 can get. This commenced between 15 April 2013 and May 2017 when the benefit cap was introduced effecting 150,000 households; the number of capped households increased after 7 November 2016 after further reductions in benefit cap<sup>9</sup>. For most households, the benefit cap was applied by reducing the amount of housing benefit they receive, so that their total benefits no longer add up to more than the cap level. This is now applied through Universal Credit, which is still being rolled out across the country at the time this report was written.

Current benefit cap amounts across the country are as follows:

If you live outside Greater London, the cap is:

- £384.62 per week (£20,000 a year) if you're in a couple, whether your children live with you or not;
- £384.62 per week (£20,000 a year) if you're single and your children live with you;
- £257.69 per week (£13,400 a year) if you're single and you do not have children, or your children do not live with you.

If you live in Greater London, the cap is:

- £442.31 per week (£23,000 a year) if you're in a couple, whether your children live with you or not;
- £442.31 per week (£23,000 a year) if you're single and your children live with you;

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>9</sup> Department for Work and Pensions (2017). *Benefit Cap* [Online]. Available from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/634937/benefit-cap-statistics-to-may-2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/634937/benefit-cap-statistics-to-may-2017.pdf) [Accessed 11 May 2018].

- £296.35 per week (£15,410 a year) if you're single and you do not have children, or your children do not live with you.

Furthermore, the government have issued a freeze on benefit payments for families with more than two children, unless your children were born before 6 April 2017. People who have three or more children will not be paid an additional amount towards Universal Credit and this could see families with larger families, and who are receiving benefits, struggle more financially<sup>10</sup>.

## 2.2 Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Homelessness Reduction Act commenced in April 2018, and places a new duty on local authorities to help prevent the homelessness of all families and single people, regardless of priority need, who are eligible for assistance and threatened with homelessness. The key measures in the Act include:

- Local Authorities should treat someone as threatened with homelessness from 56 days after they were given notice to leave, up from 28 days previously. This forces local authorities to act quickly and proactively, and gives local authorities the duty to assist an applicant 56 days before they are made homeless.
- A new duty to help all those threatened with homelessness, even if they fall outside of priority need. Local Authorities must help people stay in their current accommodation or find somewhere for them to live.
- A new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants, regardless of priority need. This could be, for example, the provision of a rent deposit or debt advice.
- A new duty for public services to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The government has committed to provide £72.7 million to local authorities to meet the new cost associated with the additional duties contained within the Act over the course of the Spending Review. Charities and the Local Government Association are generally positive about the Act, although do not think that it will reduce homelessness on its own without real changes to affordable housing numbers. Local Authorities have also expressed concerns over whether the funding to cover the extra burdens from the Act is sufficient, and the Government underestimating the increased workload expected due to the Act<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Gov.uk (2017). *2 Child limit: claiming benefits for more than 2 children* [Online]. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claiming-benefits-for-2-or-more-children> [Accessed 11 Mat 2018].

<sup>11</sup> Local Government Information Unit (2018). *Briefing: Homelessness Reduction Act 2017* [Online]. Available from: <https://www.lgiu.org.uk/pdfdownload/?b=homelessness-reduction-act-2017&key=796e2f57fd87b9b44251e692e269f0bf> [Accessed 11 May 2018].



### 3. Assessment of Need

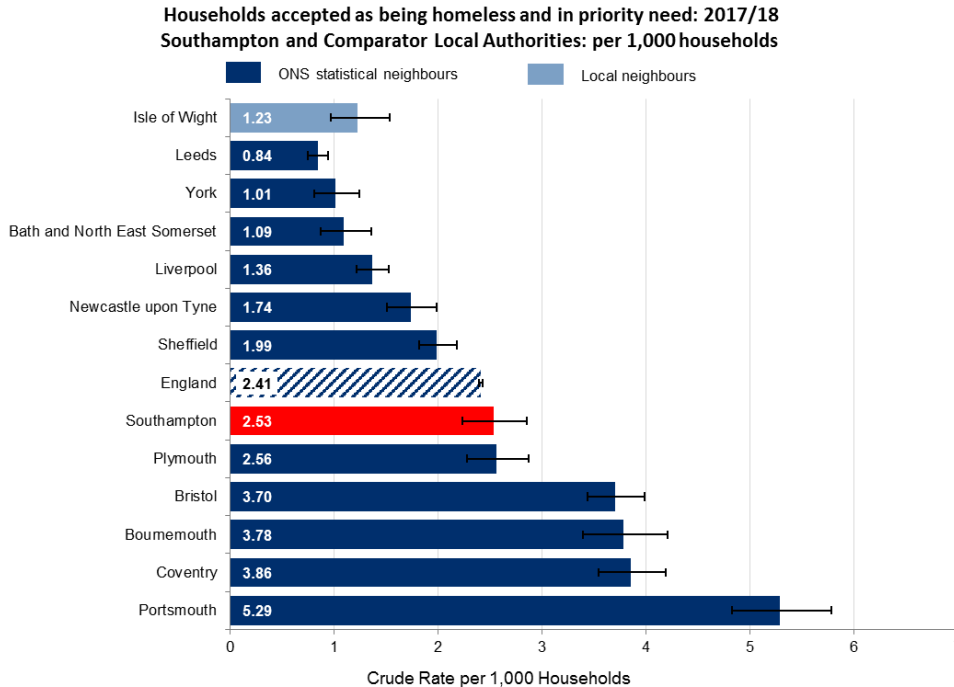
This section provides a quantitative overview of homelessness in Southampton, using nationally recorded data to benchmark against the national average and statistically similar ONS comparator areas, to examine how homelessness rates have changed in recent years. This section will also review data collected internally by Southampton City Council (SCC) in order to provide a review of who is accessing services in the city. The overview looks briefly at the three areas of statutory homelessness and people who are sleeping rough, each of these is explained in more detail later on in the report.

#### 3.1 Overview

##### 3.1.1 Statutory homeless applications and acceptances

Figure 3.1.1 looks at cases where the local authority is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a specified priority need group. Such statutorily homeless households are referred to as ‘acceptances’<sup>12</sup>. In 2017/18, Southampton had 264 households accepted, a rate of 2.53 per 1,000 households; higher than the England average (2.41), yet significantly lower than south coast neighbours Bournemouth (3.78) and Portsmouth (5.29).

Figure 3.1.1



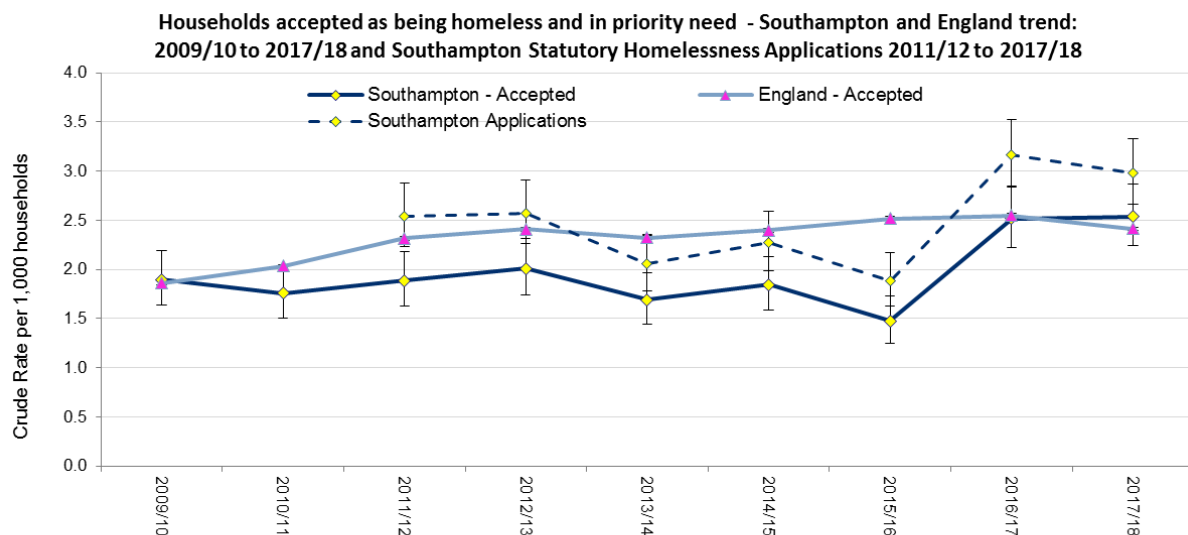
Source: Department for Communities and Local Government

<sup>12</sup> GOV.UK (2013) *Homelessness data: notes and definitions*, [Online] Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions> [Accessed 27th February 2018].

The data in Figure 3.1.2 shows the acceptance rate trend for SCC and England since 2009/10, alongside SCC applications for statutory homelessness. There has been a significant increase of acceptances in Southampton between 2015/16 and 2016/17; a 74.5% increase compared to a 2.4% increase nationally over the same time period. Between 2016/17 and 2017/18 in Southampton there was a smaller 1.5% increase. As this is the second year at this high rate, it is likely that this higher rate is reflective of new level of need, rather than an isolated peak.

The total number of applications to the council follows a similar trend to the acceptance rate, with there being a 72.1% increase over the 2015/16 to 2016/17 time period followed by a 5.1% reduction in 2017/18. Over time the trend of applications has largely followed the trends for acceptances showing that the demand has increased in the city rather than SCC accepting a higher proportion of the same number of applications.

Figure 3.1.2



Sources: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Southampton City Council

The reasons for this increase are discussed in more detail throughout this document. These include both personal and structural factors as to why people become homeless. For example there has been an increase in numbers being accepted as priority need due to poor physical and mental health, whilst the welfare reforms discussed previously (e.g. introducing Benefit Cap and Universal Credit) are also likely to have contributed to this increase.

Universal Credit is paid directly to the claimant who is then responsible for paying their landlord; this may have led to landlords being less likely to accept tenants on Universal Credit. The ultimate impact of this is fewer rental properties being available and a greater demand on homelessness services. This may also explain the decrease which is seen in preventions<sup>13</sup> (see Figure 3.4.1), if preventions go down

<sup>13</sup> *Preventions: providing people with the ways and means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness.*



because people have no accommodation to move into then rates of statutory homeless will go up. Added to this, Local Housing Allowance rates (paid to low-income families in the private rented sector to help them cope with high housing costs), has been frozen by central government as rental prices continue to rise (see Figure 3.3.10 and accompanying text for further information).

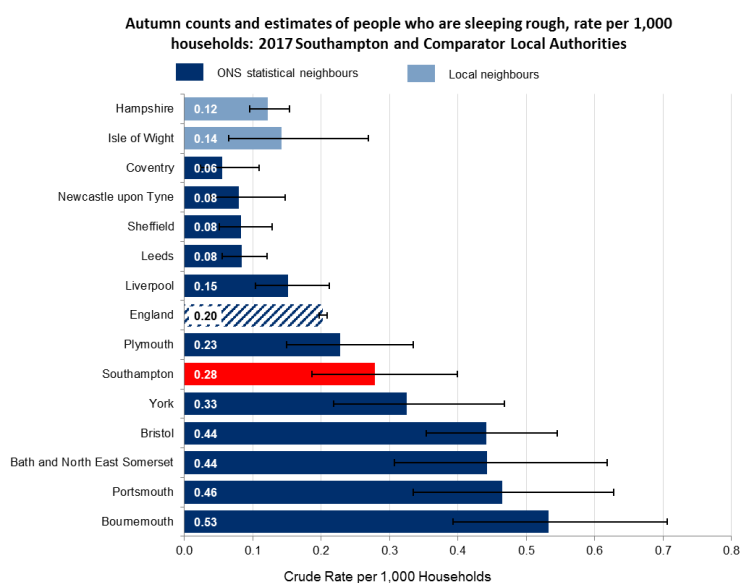
These structural changes will have impacted people across the country but the rate of homelessness and in priority need in England has not seen the increase in the last year that Southampton has. This suggests that the population of Southampton may be more vulnerable to these changes than other parts of the country which could see rates of homelessness in Southampton rise above the England rate in the next few years.

### 3.1.2 People who are sleeping rough

The Department for Communities and Local Government publishes an annual count and estimates of people that are sleeping rough in England every autumn. The counts and estimates are single night snapshots of the number of people who are sleeping rough in local authority areas. These numbers are provided by Local Authorities who either conduct a street count or provide an estimate. The counts are based on one night of counting and can be affected by adverse weather. In addition, if a person who had been sleeping rough had found a squat to use at the time of the count, they would not be on the street and therefore would not be counted.

For the 2017 autumn count there were 29 people were counted sleeping rough in Southampton. Figure 3.1.3 shows the count rate for Southampton against its ONS comparator areas. Southampton has a rate which is higher than the England average, and about midway compared to comparator areas. However, the small numbers mean that the differences are not statistically significant.

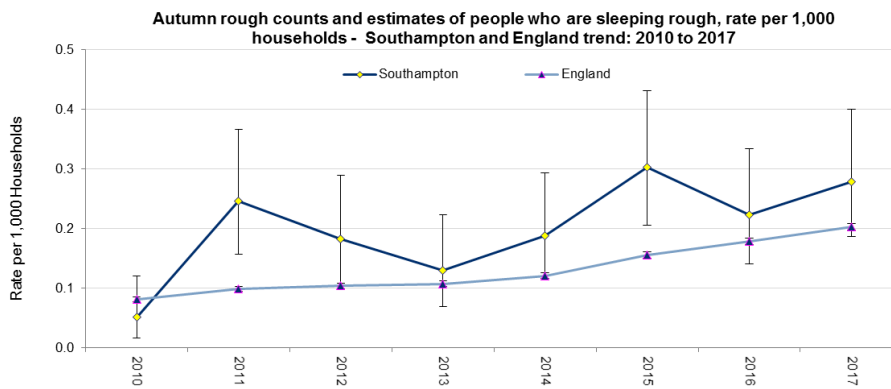
Figure 3.1.3



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

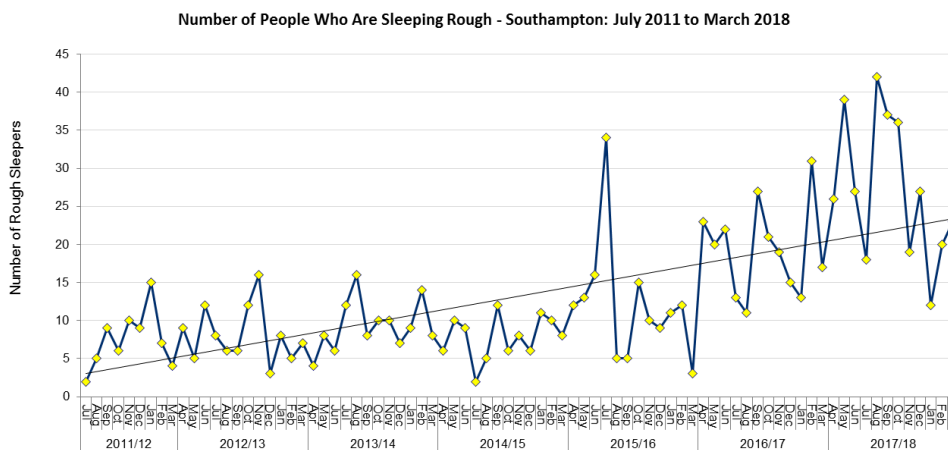
The trend data for the annual rough sleeping count is prone to fluctuations for the reasons discussed above. However, as figure 3.1.4 demonstrates, there does appear to be an overall rising trend in Southampton, with the biggest increase recorded between 2010 and 2011. The rate in Southampton has generally higher than the England average over the period studied; although only statistically significantly higher in 2011 and 2015. The overall rate for England has also steadily increased over time (since 2010), suggesting an increased level of need nationally as well as locally. However, it should be noted that the annual homelessness monitoring report by Crisis<sup>14</sup> questions the validity of this data, as in 2016, 85% of returns were estimates. The report also states that any increase in people who are sleeping rough is most likely to be due to tenancy breakdowns very often associated with benefit restrictions, cuts to services and growing mental health problems.

Figure 3.1.4



Sources: Department for Communities and Local Government

Figure 3.1.5



Sources: Southampton City Council

<sup>14</sup> Fitzpatrick. S, Pawson. H, Bramley. G, Wilcox. S, and Watts. B, (2017) *The homelessness monitor: England 2017*, Crisis, [Online] Available from: [https://crisis.org.uk/media/236823/homelessness\\_monitor\\_england\\_2017.pdf](https://crisis.org.uk/media/236823/homelessness_monitor_england_2017.pdf) [Accessed 27 February 2018].

In addition to the annual count, Southampton City Council undertakes a separate count each month of people who are sleeping rough; a count is conducted on one night each month. Figure 3.1.5 shows the trend in these counts between 2011/12 and 2017/18 and, despite expected fluctuations, illustrates an overall increasing trend in rough sleepers in the city over time. The characteristics of people who are sleeping rough in Southampton are explored later on in this document.

### 3.1.3 Key findings

- Overall Southampton is seeing an increasing trend in the number (and rate) of people who are homeless and in priority need, applications for homelessness and people who are sleeping rough.
- Trends are also increasing in England, although the increase is not to the same extent.
- Amongst other reasons this could be due to Southampton residents being more vulnerable to structural changes in benefit policy as well as being more at risk of the personal risks of homelessness.

## 3.2 Who is accessing services

This section considers the characteristics of those who have been accepted as being homeless and in priority need, applied for homelessness prevention and those who are rough sleeping in order to better understand who are most vulnerable in the city.

### 3.2.1 Age profile for those who are statutory homeless

The highest proportion of acceptances are among the 25-44 age group which accounted for 55% of all acceptances during 2016/17. Looking at the numbers in each age group, homeless acceptances among the 25-44 age group doubled between 2015/16 and 2016/17 from 72 to 144. During the same time period homelessness acceptances for those aged 45 and over has remained the lowest among all age groups although between 2015/16 and 2016/17 the overall number has doubled.

*Figure 3.2.1 Percentage and number of those who are homeless and in priority need by age groups- Southampton: 2008/09 to 2016/17*

| Age Group | 2008/09       | 2009/10       | 2010/11       | 2011/12       | 2012/13       | 2013/14       | 2014/15        | 2015/16       | 2016/17        |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 16-24     | 34.3%<br>(57) | 32.3%<br>(72) | 36.0%<br>(62) | 38.9%<br>(72) | 54.5%<br>(30) | 46.6%<br>(83) | 35.1%<br>(65)  | 41.6%<br>(62) | 32.3%<br>(84)  |
| 25-44     | 48.8%<br>(81) | 43.9%<br>(98) | 50.0%<br>(86) | 46.5%<br>(86) | 34.5%<br>(19) | 39.9%<br>(71) | 57.8%<br>(107) | 48.3%<br>(72) | 55.4%<br>(144) |
| 45 +      | 16.9%<br>(28) | 23.8%<br>(53) | 14.0%<br>(24) | 14.6%<br>(27) | 10.9%<br>(6)  | 13.5%<br>(24) | 7.0%<br>(13)   | 10.1%<br>(15) | 12.3%<br>(32)  |

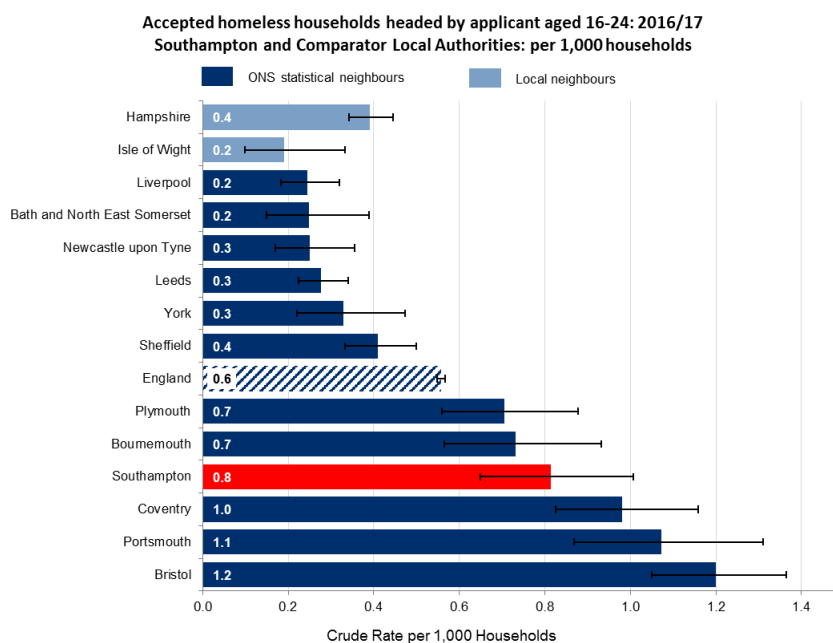
*Note: Percentages may not sum due to rounding.*

Among those aged 16-24, numbers of statutory homelessness increased by 35% between 2015/16 and 2016/17; in Southampton these are predominantly young families with children or with a child



expected. Public Health England highlight homelessness among this age group as being of particular concern as homeless young people are less likely to be in education, employment or training (NEET) or experiencing a disrupted education. Poverty and desperation means some homeless young people can turn to crime, which further decreases the chances of them finding work and escaping their situation. Homeless young people are also more likely to be victims of crime, as their situation puts them at risk of exploitation, particularly if they become homeless at a very young age<sup>15</sup>. Nationally, 24% of homeless young people are LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning) and 77% of them identify coming out as the main cause of their homelessness<sup>16</sup>.

Figure 3.2.2



Source: Public Health England

Figure 3.2.2 shows national rates of those accepted homeless households headed by an applicant aged 16-24<sup>17</sup>, the reason that these households are priority need might be the age of the applicant or because they are expecting or have a child. Southampton ranks 4<sup>th</sup> highest amongst comparator areas and has a rate significantly higher than England. As mentioned above, in the last year there was a 35% increase in this age group following a trend which has been decreasing since 2013/14. In England there was a 2.5% decrease in this age group between 2015/16 and 2016/17 and rates have been decreasing

<sup>15</sup> Public Health England (2017) *Public Health Profiles: Indicator Definitions and Supporting Information*. [Online] Available from:

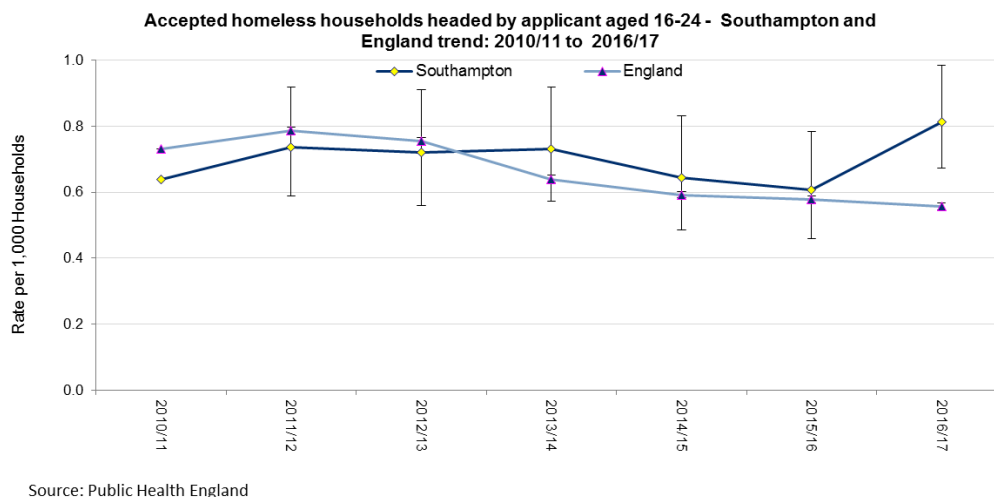
<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/homelessness#page/6/gid/1/pat/6/par/E12000008/ati/102/are/E06000045/iid/92695/age/264/sex/4> [Accessed 6 March 2018].

<sup>16</sup> The Albert Kennedy Trust (2017) *inter-AKT* [Online] Available from: <https://www.akt.org.uk/> [Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018]

<sup>17</sup> The definition is: households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falling within a priority need group, and consequently owed a main homelessness duty by a local housing authority. Figures reflect decisions under the 1996 Housing Act, and any residual 1985 Housing Act cases.

nationally since 2011/12 (see Figure 3.2.3). It should be noted that in Southampton this age group contains a large number of young families which may not be the case in other areas.

Figure 3.2.3



When considering all young people referrals to homelessness services, there has been a reduction in the number who returned home, which is currently at a three year low. Anecdotal observations from the Homelessness Mediation Outreach Team suggest that this could in part be due to the benefit cap meaning parents can no longer afford to have their children at home. There were a total of 97 referrals of young people in 2016/17 with the majority (22) housed long term, 20 were housed in emergency accommodation and 19 were returned home. The rise in acceptances in this age group may also reflect a lack of affordable accommodation available to people in this age group (see section 3.3.5 on availability and affordability of housing).

### 3.2.2 People who are sleeping rough

In November 2017 a small team of workers from local providers (Society of St James Hostels, Homeless Vulnerable Adult Support Team and Southampton City Council's Street Homeless Prevention Team) carried out a survey of people who were begging and/or not in stable accommodation in the city. The survey team approached people who were sleeping rough, people who were begging and some people were approached in hostels. The responses from 40 people were recorded (80% male and 20% female). Of these, 45% were aged 35-44 and 90% identified as White. A total of 26 respondents said that they beg, of these 16 people beg every day and 6 beg several times a week, 69% of people who beg are sleeping rough and 19% are in hostels with the remainder in social rented or supported housing. The numbers accessing specific services was not widely recorded, however 31 people (78%) reported a use of or dependence on drugs or alcohol and of those, 68% stated they were 'known to substance misuse services'. In addition, 26 respondents reported concerns around mental ill health, yet of this group, only 31% reported that they were known to mental health services.

Of the people surveyed, 27 (68%) reported not being in stable accommodation as they were either sleeping rough (25 people) or sofa surfing (2 people). Other accommodation included living in a hostel (23%) council provided or other social housing (5%) and supported housing (5%). Substance misuse was reported as the main barrier for individuals not accessing accommodation, with 7 people citing this as a factor. Financial concerns (rent arrears/ money for rent deposits) were also a key factor, with 6 people citing this barrier. The vast majority of respondents had a local connection; lack of a local connection was only cited by 5 people as a factor impeding their access to stable accommodation and 3 people reported that they did not want to go to or were barred from hostels.

The survey did not ask how long people have been begging or rough sleeping. However, an evidence review by Public Health England (PHE) looking at adults with complex needs (with a particular focus on street begging and street sleeping)<sup>18</sup>, cites a consultation conducted with street homeless conducted by the charity *Reaching Out*. Reaching Out found that amongst the 257 people they interviewed in England:

- 10% had had a permanent place to stay within the last 6 months
- 44% had occupied permanent accommodation in the last year
- 32% had not had a permanent place to stay for more than 3 years
- 11% had not had a permanent place to stay for more than 10 years

The information shows that 43% of people have not had a permanent place to stay for over 3 years so for many people this is not a short-term problem.

### 3.2.3 Key findings

- The highest proportion of acceptances are among the 25-44 age group which accounted for 55% of all acceptances during 2016/17.
- Within Southampton there has been a reduction in the number of homeless young people who returned home, which is currently at a three year low.
- In a survey of people who were begging and/or sleeping rough in Southampton, substance misuse was reported as the main barrier for individuals not accessing accommodation. Financial concerns (rent arrears/ money for rent deposits) were also a key factor.
- National data shows that 43% of people have not had a permanent place to stay for over 3 years so for many people this is not a short-term problem.

## 3.3 Causes of Homelessness

The causes of homelessness are often complex, the reasons for statutory homelessness recorded by SCC are reported below, although they do not consider the wider reasons behind homelessness. In addition the charity Crisis along with Heriot Watt University published a report in 2017 which used

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<sup>18</sup> Public Health England (2017) *Evidence review: Adults with complex needs (with a particular focus on street begging and street sleeping)*.



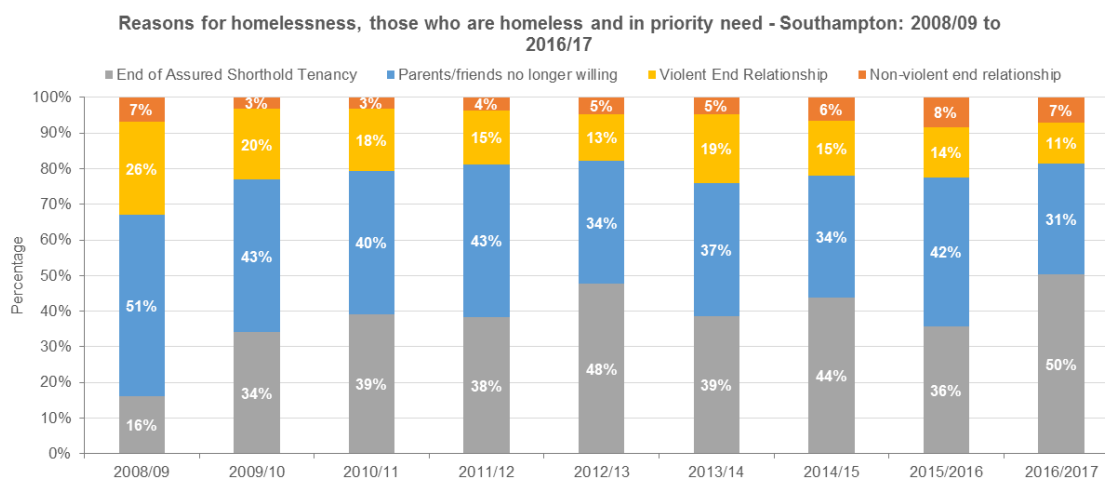
secondary data sources including panel surveys, statutory statistics and academic studies to examine homelessness between 2011 and 2016, the key findings of this report are discussed below<sup>19</sup>. Homelessness is caused by a complex interplay between a person's individual circumstances and adverse 'structural' factors outside their direct control<sup>20</sup>. Structural causes of homelessness are social and economic in nature, and are often outside the control of the individual or family concerned. The structural causes of homelessness include poverty, lack of affordable housing and policy changes, all of which are discussed in this section of the report.

### 3.3.1 Reasons for statutory homelessness

There are often multiple and complex reasons for the loss of a home, but common causes of homelessness acceptances amongst applications to the council are: end of Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST), relationship breakdown or friends or family no longer able to accommodate.

In Southampton in 2016/17 half of acceptances were rooted in the end of an AST and half due to interpersonal issues and risks. The rise in the end of AST could be due to the impacts felt from 2nd phase of benefit cap. Another factor could be landlords withdrawing from the market or moving to the professional market to reduce business risks. Universal Credit was not in place for 2015/16 but it could be the anticipation of it persuaded landlords to withdraw from the market.

Figure 3.3.1



Source: Southampton City Council

<sup>19</sup> Bramley, G (2017) Homelessness projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain, *Crisis and Heriot Watt University*, [Online] Available from: [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237582/crisis\\_homelessness\\_projections\\_2017.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237582/crisis_homelessness_projections_2017.pdf) [Accessed 12 March 2018]

<sup>20</sup> Shelter *What causes homelessness?*, [Online] Available from: [http://england.shelter.org.uk/campaigns/\\_why\\_we\\_campaign/tackling\\_homelessness/What\\_causes\\_homelessness](http://england.shelter.org.uk/campaigns/_why_we_campaign/tackling_homelessness/What_causes_homelessness) [Accessed 24 January 2018].



Figure 3.3.1 shows that the proportion of acceptances due to the end of an AST was at its highest during 2016/17; the numbers in Figure 3.3.2 shows end of AST increasing to 106 acceptances in 2016/17 from 43 in 2015/16 (almost a 150% increase) over the period, and accounting for half of the acceptances in 2016/17. Figure 3.3.2 also shows that the number of parents/friends not willing is at the highest during the time period 2008/09 to 2016/17, emphasising earlier information about younger people who are homeless. The units of private accommodation SCC have access to through private landlords has been decreasing since 2012/13, with 129 units available that year and only 21 available in 2017/18. This decrease may be due to landlords not willing to let to people on Universal Credit, and the changes in tax which means the amount of income tax relief landlords can get on residential property finance costs will be restricted to the basic rate of tax<sup>21</sup>. Both of these may have resulted in a decrease in the number of properties available, making preventions harder and increasing the levels of statutory homeless.

*Figure 3.3.2: Reasons for homelessness, those who are homeless and in priority need - Southampton: 2008/09 to 2016/17*

| Reasons for homelessness          | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Non-violent end relationship      | 8       | *       | *       | 5       | 7       | 7       | 10      | 10      | 15      |
| Violent End Relationship          | 31      | *       | *       | 21      | 20      | 29      | 24      | 17      | 24      |
| Parents/friends no longer willing | 60      | 54      | 52      | 59      | 52      | 56      | 53      | 50      | 66      |
| End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy  | 19      | 43      | 51      | 53      | 72      | 58      | 68      | 43      | 106     |

*\*Numbers have been suppressed to protect confidentiality.*

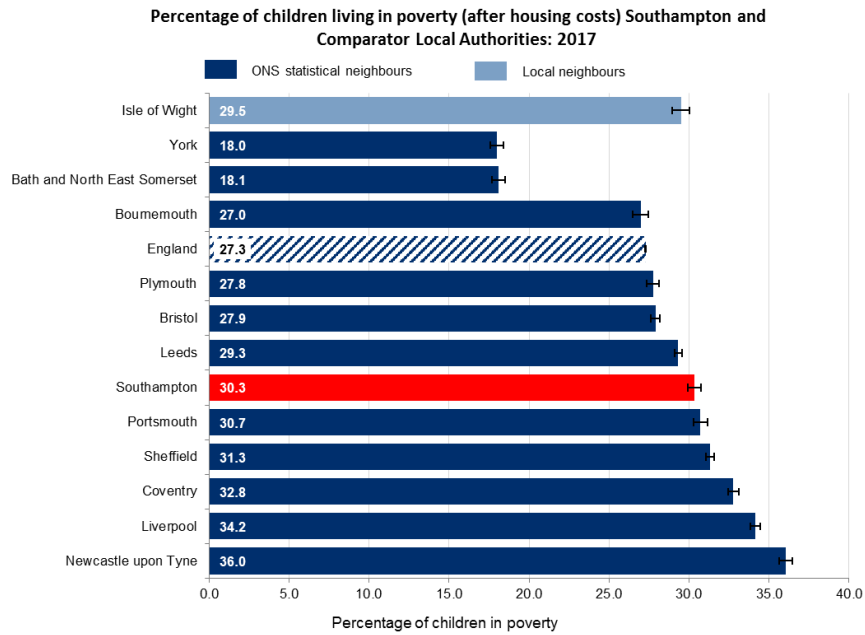
### 3.3.2 Child poverty

The report by Crisis suggests that the most important driver of homelessness in all its forms is poverty. The Centre for Research in Social Policy (CRSP) creates annual child poverty estimates. These modelled estimates define poverty using the HMRC data of children on out-of-work benefits and children in families on tax credits who's reported family incomes are below 60 per cent of the median; it is a measure of relative poverty compared to others. Figure 3.3.3 shows that in 2017 Southampton had a higher percentage of children living in poverty (30.3%) than the England average (27.3%). Figure 3.3.4 shows these figures at ward level for Southampton, with the highest rates being recorded in Bevois (47.6%) and Bargate (43.7%) wards.

<sup>21</sup> GOV.UK (2016) Changes to tax relief for residential landlords [Online] Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/changes-to-tax-relief-for-residential-landlords> [Accessed 14 March 2018].

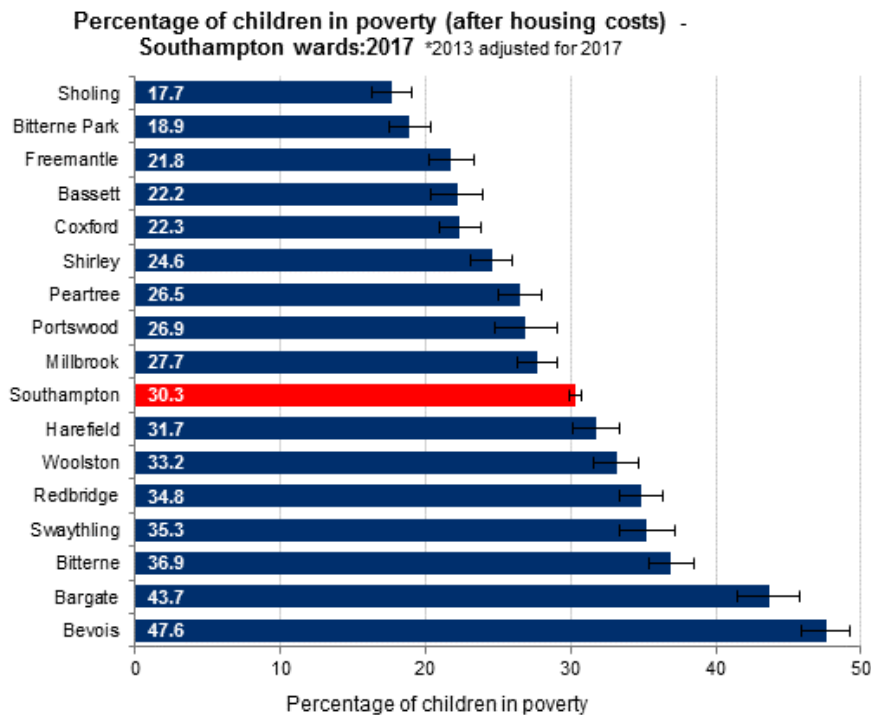


Figure 3.3.3



Source: Centre for Research in Social Policy  
Note: data was not available at County level

Figure 3.3.4

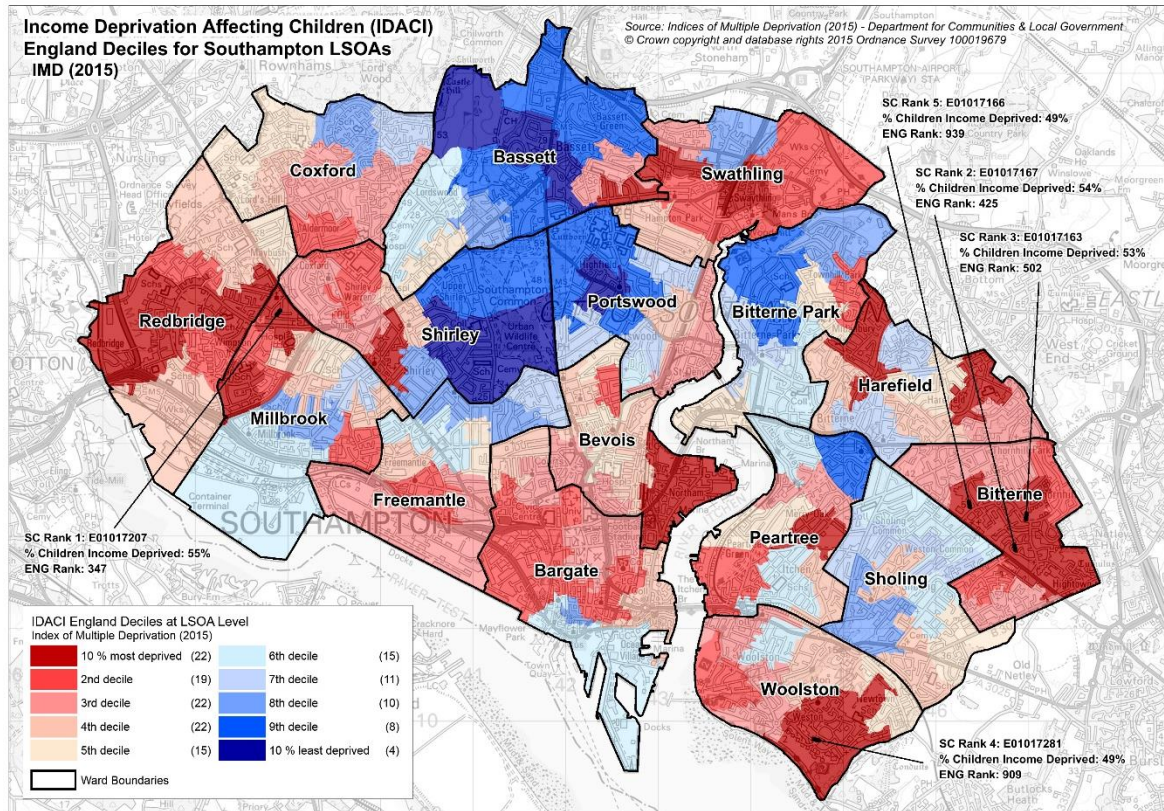


Source: Centre for Research in Social Policy

3.3.3 Income

The main indicators of poverty are based around income<sup>22</sup>. Figure 3.3.5 looks at income deprivation for Southampton based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation, an indicator which is based on people on low incomes who are in receipt of benefits and tax credits<sup>23</sup>. The map shows that within Southampton there are some neighbourhoods which are amongst the most income deprived areas in the country. The area with the highest percentage of children affected by income deprivation is in the ward of Millbrook, although the area in question is surrounded by less deprived areas, which may explain why the ward appears lower than the Southampton average in Figure 3.3.4. Bitterne ward contains 3 of the 5 areas with the highest percentages of income deprivation affecting children; Bitterne also has the third highest rate of children living in poverty. People in these areas therefore, may be at increased risk of homelessness.

Figure 3.3.5



<sup>22</sup> Feargal McGuinness (2018) Poverty in the UK: statistics, *House of Commons Library*, Briefing Paper Number 7069. [Online] Available from: <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN07096/SN07096.pdf> [Accessed 12 March 2018].

<sup>23</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, The English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015 – Guidance [Online] Available from: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/464430/English\\_Index\\_of\\_Multiple\\_Deprivation\\_2015\\_-\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/464430/English_Index_of_Multiple_Deprivation_2015_-_Guidance.pdf) [Accessed 12 March 2018].



Figure 3.3.6

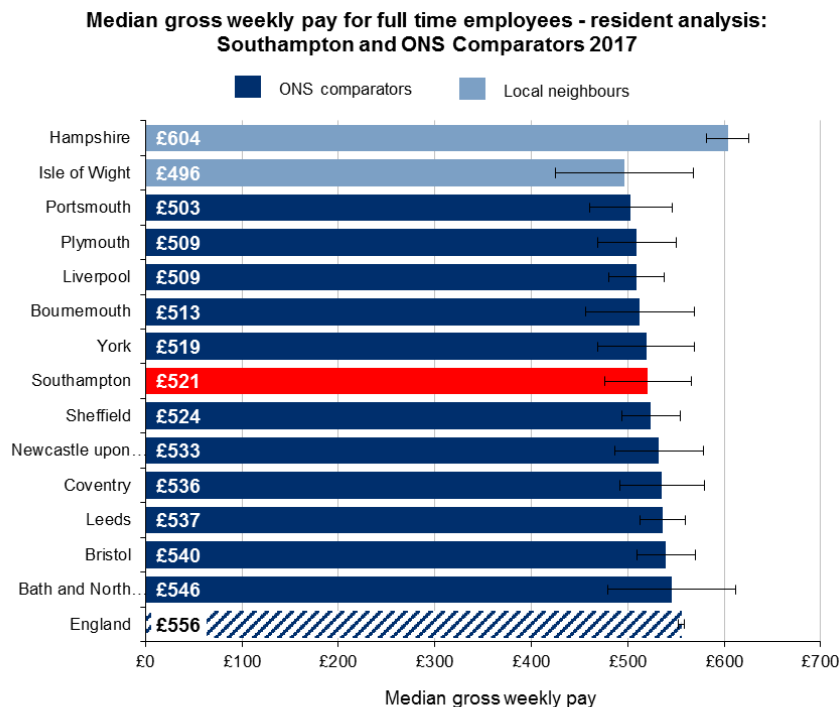


Figure 3.3.6 shows how Southampton compares to statistical neighbours for resident weekly earnings. The gross weekly pay for residents of Southampton is £521, which is lower than the England average (£556) and significantly lower than the Hampshire average (£604). Southampton ranks roughly midway amongst comparator areas. Resident earnings have increased in line with England, although there have been smaller increases for the 10% lowest earners in the city, potentially widening the inequality gap in the city. Since 2013, weekly pay in ‘real’ terms increased for residents in Southampton. However, adjusted for inflation, earnings are not yet back to their peak in 2008. For further information see SCC’s Economic Assessment<sup>24</sup>.

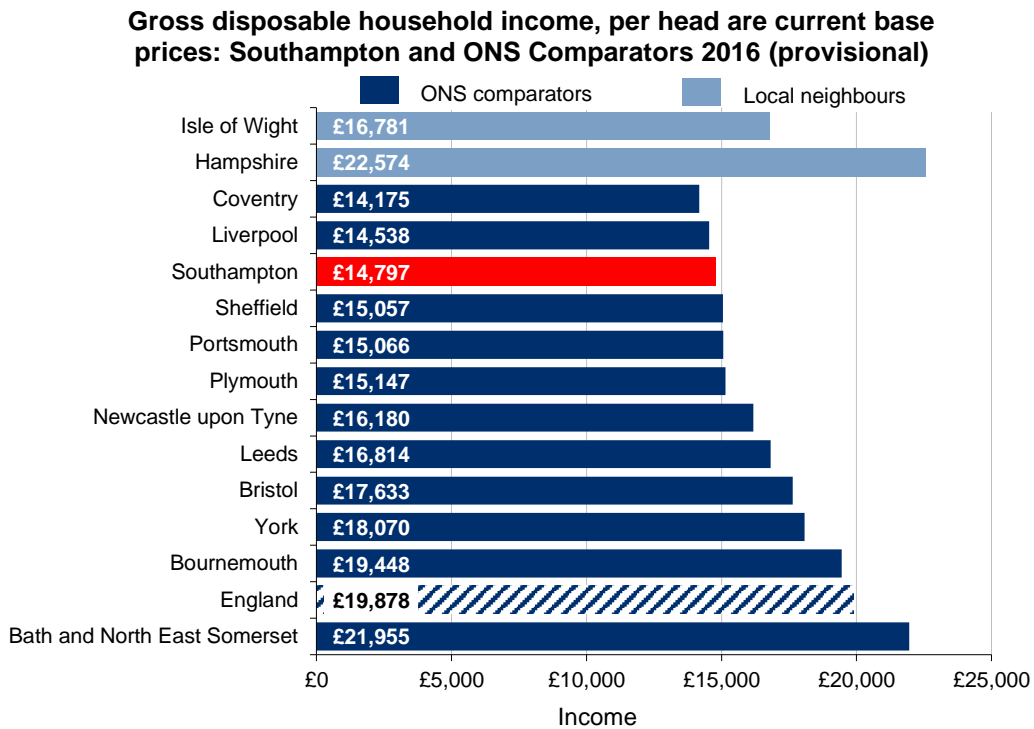
### 3.3.4 Household income

Gross disposable household income (GDHI) is the amount of money that all of the individuals in the household sector have available for spending or saving after they have paid direct and indirect taxes and received any direct benefits. GDHI is a concept that is seen to reflect the “material welfare” of the household sector.

<sup>24</sup> Southampton City Council (2017) *Southampton Economic Assessment* [Online] Available from: <http://www.publichealth.southampton.gov.uk/healthintelligence/jsna/economy.aspx> [Accessed 11 June 2018].



Figure 3.3.7



Source: Office for National Statistics

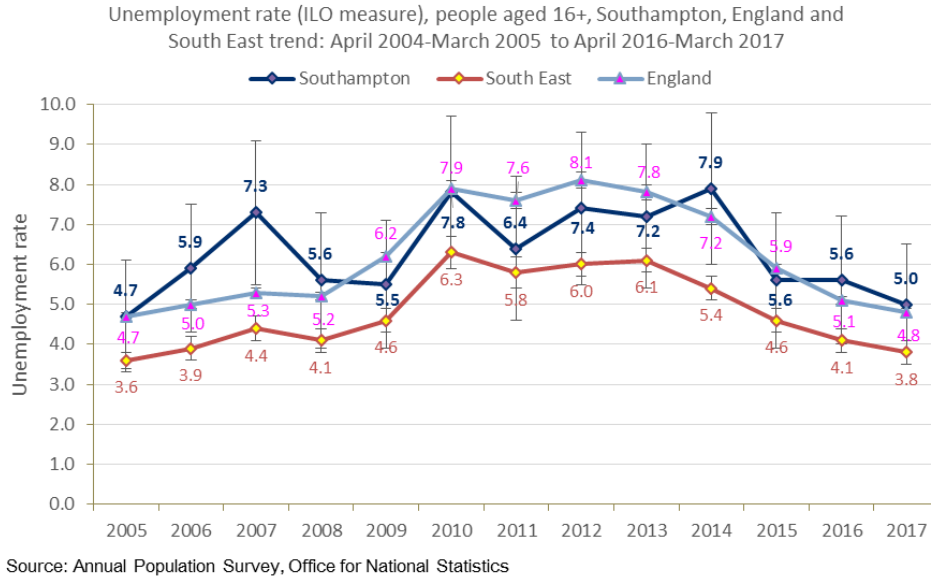
Figure 3.3.7 illustrates how the GDHI per head for 2016 for Southampton is £14,797, which is approximately £5,000 lower than the England average (£19,878) and over £7,000 less than Hampshire. Southampton has the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest GDHI amongst comparators, and less than Portsmouth which has a GDHI of £15,066. Trend analysis shows an increase of £5,170 for Southampton between 1997 and 2016 although there was a £225 decrease from 2015 to 2016. This is compared to an increase of £8,802 for England between 1997 and 2016 and a £119 increase from 2015 to 2016. This difference in the growth of GDHI has meant the gap between Southampton and the national average has widened over time. The small growth for Southampton when compared to England may be due to factors including the cost of housing, smaller rises in wages than other comparators and the type of employment available and/or local skills. One feature of the Southampton economy is that the higher paid jobs in the city are often filled by people commuting into the city; whilst worker wages are amongst the highest compared to statistical neighbours, resident earnings are amongst the lowest.

### 3.3.5 Unemployment

Unemployment is another potential structural cause of homelessness closely linked to income. Figure 3.3.8 illustrates how the unemployment rate in Southampton has fallen in recent years from 7.9% in 2014 to 5.0% in 2017, a fall of 2.9% points over three years. Over the same period the England rate fell by 2.4% points and the South East by 1.6% points. This follows a period of fairly high unemployment (between 2010 and 2014) following the recession, which mirrors the national trend. Throughout the majority of the period, Southampton has had an unemployment rate similar to

England, although the South East rate has been consistently lower. Although unemployment has fallen, the jobs people are in are not necessarily full time stable employment as after the recession there was a clear shift towards part-time work.

Figure 3.3.8



### 3.3.6 Availability and affordability of housing

The availability and affordability of different forms of potentially accessible housing, whether social rented lettings or suitable forms of temporary accommodation were also identified by Crisis as being important in driving trends in future levels of core homelessness.

The housing affordability ratio shows how affordable properties are, it is a ratio of the lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings; the higher the ratio the less affordable properties are. The ratio takes no account of interest rates and mortgage repayments and so has only limited applicability as a measure of affordability. Figure 3.3.9 shows that Southampton is less affordable than England as a whole and is in the top 5 least affordable areas among its ONS comparators. Figure 3.3.10 illustrates how the housing affordability ratio has been consistently higher (less affordable) than England over time, with the gap widening since 2014.

Figure 3.3.9

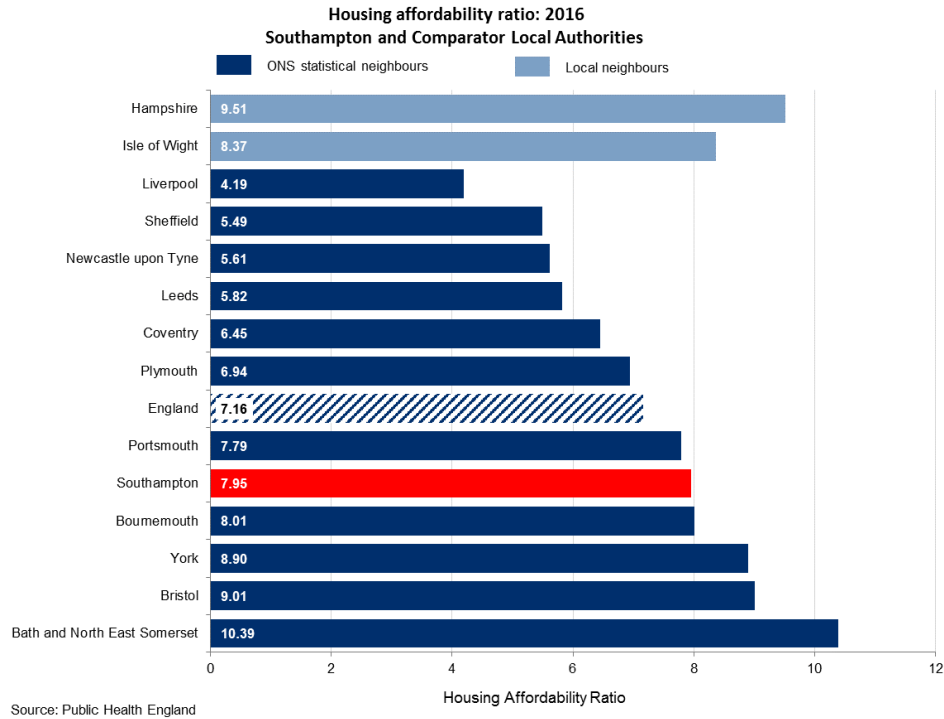
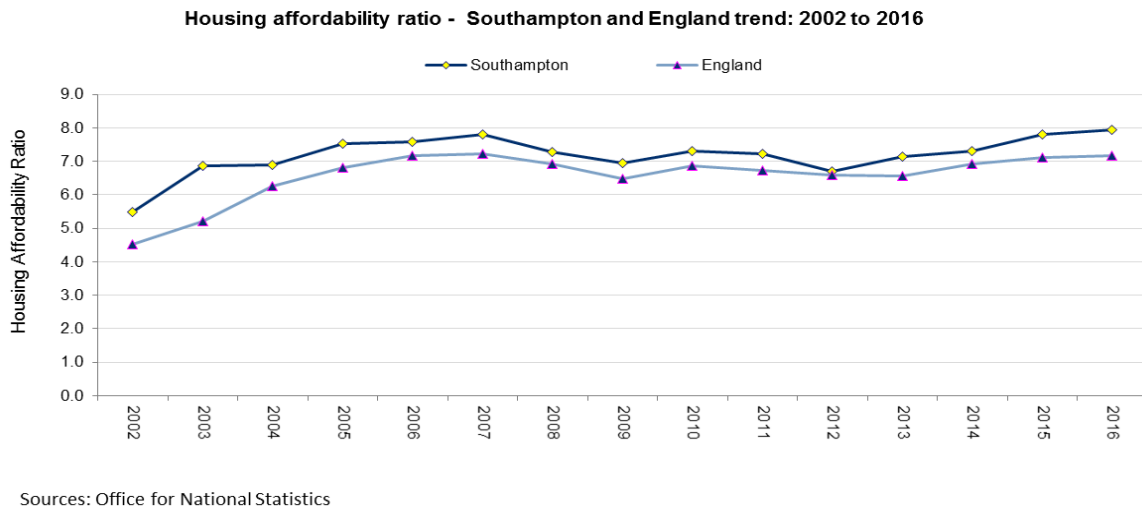


Figure 3.3.10



Local housing allowance (LHA) helps people with rent and some service charges. People are eligible if they need help paying rent regardless of whether they are working or claim other benefits, although people are not eligible if they have savings over £16,000, unless they are receiving a pension credit (a benefit paid to people who have reached the qualifying pension age and have a low income)<sup>25</sup>. LHA

<sup>25</sup> Shelter (2017) *What is local housing allowance (LHA)?* [Online] Available from: [https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice/housing\\_benefit/what\\_is\\_local\\_housing\\_allowance\\_lha](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/housing_benefit/what_is_local_housing_allowance_lha) [Accessed 13 March 2018].

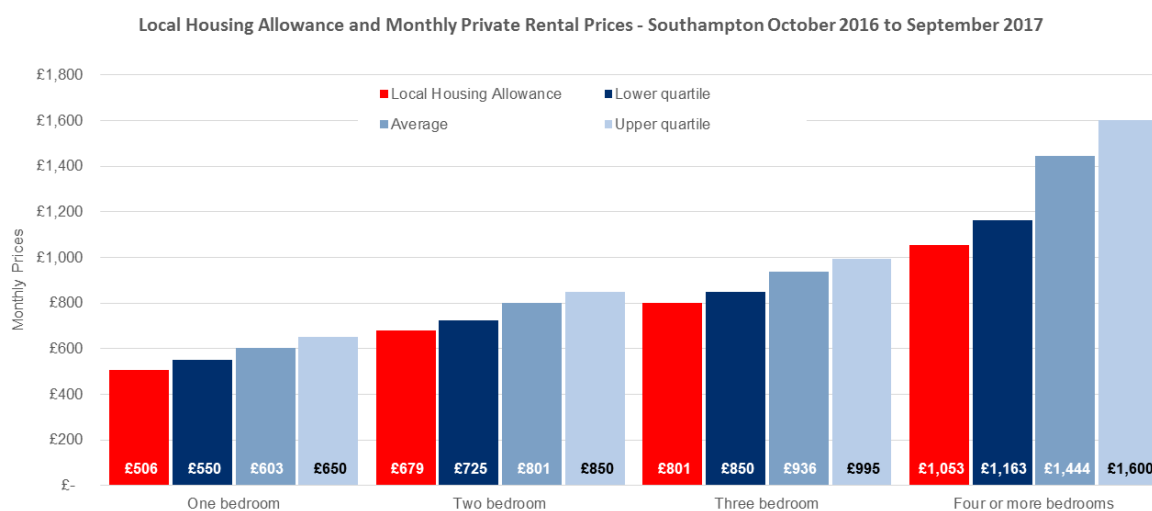


rates are calculated for every local area based on local rents. The maximum amount of support a household can claim will depend on where they live, the minimum number of bedrooms they need and their income.

Since 2010 housing benefit levels have not risen in line with rising private rents; rates of LHA have been frozen by central government and currently they will remain frozen at their 2016 levels until 2020, regardless of how much local private rents increase. This means that most private renters who need their income topped up by housing benefit will face a monthly shortfall between the actual cost of their rent and the support available<sup>26</sup>.

A survey of local councils by the Local Government Association found that of those councils that responded, 96% are concerned that “homelessness would increase” and 94% said it would be “more difficult to meet the requirements” of the new Homelessness Reduction Act with regards to re-homing if the freeze on the LHA were not lifted up until 2020. They also found that as rents increase, the freeze on the level of Housing Benefit makes private renting less affordable for many families at risk of homelessness, and 9 in 10 councils reporting that private landlords in their area are renting fewer homes to low income households<sup>27</sup>.

Figure 3.3.11



Source: Southampton City Council and Valuation Office Agency

Figure 3.3.11 shows LHA in comparison to the lowest and highest quartile rental prices in Southampton (with the quartiles being one quarter of the data). In Southampton the LHA amounts are lower than lowest quartile of rental prices showing that rental prices in Southampton are clearly

<sup>26</sup> Shelter (2017) *Briefing: Local Housing Allowance freeze*, [Online] Available from:

[https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/policy\\_and\\_research/policy\\_library/policy\\_library\\_folder/briefing\\_who\\_is\\_affected\\_by\\_the\\_lha\\_freeze](https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_and_research/policy_library/policy_library_folder/briefing_who_is_affected_by_the_lha_freeze) [Accessed 13 March 2018].

<sup>27</sup> Local Government Association (2017) *Local Housing Allowance freeze risks 'increasing' homelessness for private renters, councils warn*, [Online] Available from: <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/local-housing-allowance-freeze-risks-increasing-homelessness-private-renters-councils> [Accessed 13 March 2018]



unattainable for some lower income families even with the help of LHA. Unfortunately the Valuation Office Agency who produce this data state that it is not possible to use this data to produce trend analysis as the data is based on a sample of rental information and this sample changes over time<sup>28</sup>.

Figure 3.3.12 shows the shortfall between the LHA and the lowest quartile of rental properties, with almost £50 needed for most property types for the LHA to meet the rent required for the lowest quartile priced properties, and over £100 more required for the properties with four or more bed rooms.

*Figure 3.3.12 Shortfall between Local Housing Allowance and lower quartile monthly rental prices – Southampton October 2016 to September 2017*

| Housing type          | Local Housing Allowance | Lower quartile | Shortfall between Local Housing Allowance and lower quartile |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|--|
| One bedroom           | £506                    | £550           | -£44   |
| Two bedroom           | £679                    | £725           | -£46   |
| Three bedroom         | £801                    | £850           | -£49   |
| Four or more bedrooms | £1,053                  | £1,163         | -£110  |

Within Southampton social rented housing is available from Southampton City Council and the local housing associations. Housing associations in England are independent societies, bodies of trustees or companies established for the purpose of providing low-cost social housing for people in housing need on a non-profit-making basis. Housing associations provide a wide range of housing, some managing large estates of housing for families, while the smallest may perhaps manage a single scheme of housing for older people<sup>29</sup>.

*Figure 3.3.13: Housing register – total number of lets by property size and snapshot of housing demand of live applications and eligible to bid for property size*

| Type   | Total number of lets |           |           |           |           | Demand of live applications |      |
|--------|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------|------|
|        | 2012/2013            | 2013/2014 | 2014/2015 | 2015/2016 | 2016/2017 | Sep-17                      |      |
| Studio | 67                   | 60        | 68        | 62        | 73        | Studio/1 bed                | 4928 |
| 1 bed  | 482                  | 531       | 549       | 586       | 524       |                             |      |
| 2 bed  | 417                  | 482       | 518       | 537       | 413       | 2 bed                       | 1677 |
| 3 bed  | 173                  | 239       | 267       | 154       | 166       | 3 bed                       | 1232 |
| 4 bed  | 7                    | 25        | 45        | 16        | 12        | 4+ bed                      | 354  |

Source: Southampton City Council

Figure 3.3.13 shows the number of lets by property size from both the housing association and SCC stock as well as a snapshot of demand of live applications for September 2017. Comparing the number

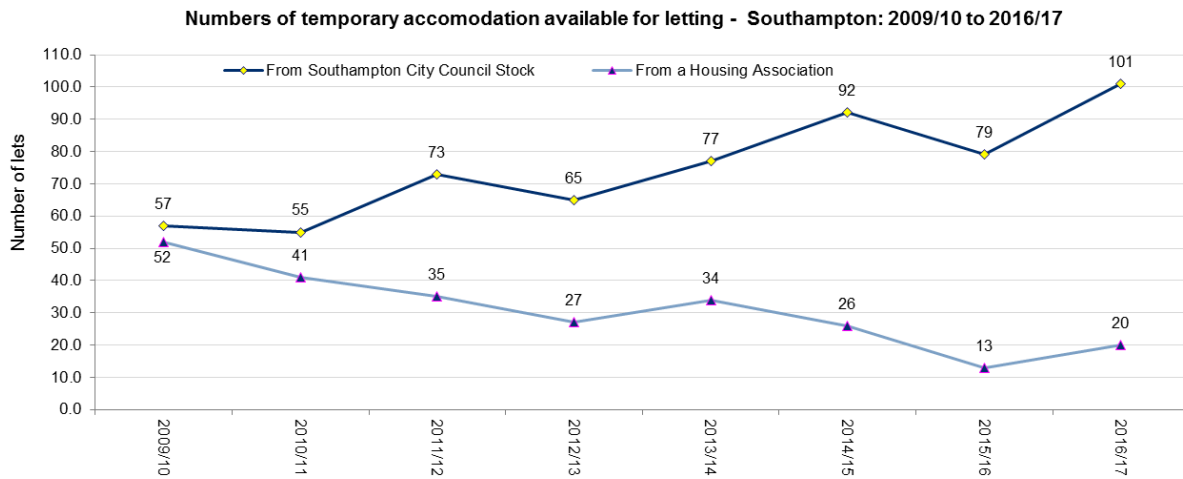
<sup>28</sup> GOV.UK (2018) *Valuation Office Agency: private rental market statistics*, [Online] Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/private-rental-market-statistics> [Accessed 16 March 2018]

<sup>29</sup> GOV.UK (2012) *Definitions of general housing terms*, [Online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/definitions-of-general-housing-terms> [Accessed 13 March 2018]

of lets that occurred in 2016/17 and the demand of live applications from September 2017 from those who were accepted onto the housing register, it is possible to see that the number of applications for all property sizes in one month is greater than the total number of lets for the year. If a household is accepted onto the Housing Register they are advised on what size properties they are eligible to bid on so a single person would not be eligible for a four bedroom house but a studio or one bedroom flat.

For temporary accommodation, the number of lets from Southampton City Council has shown an overall increasing trend. To increase turnover and avoid the need for further borrowing of council stock, overall time spent in temporary accommodation has been reduced from 9 months to 6 months. If alternative accommodation has not be secured by the end of 6 months additional points are added to their Housing Register application to assist with move on.

Figure 3.3.14



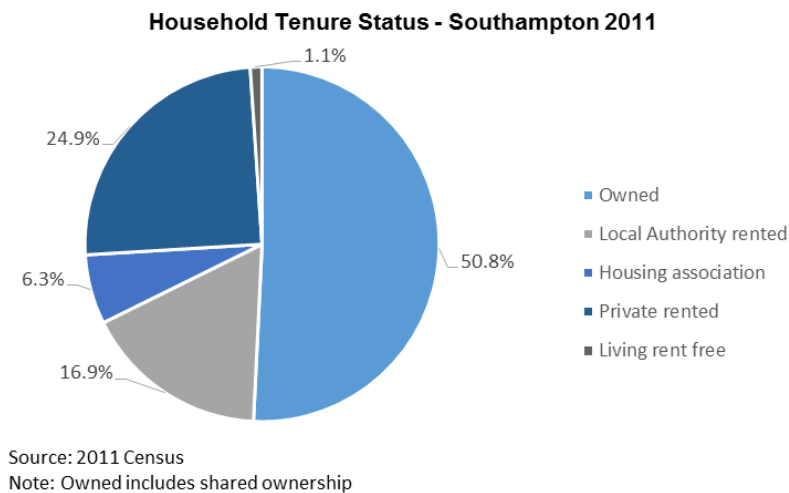
Source: Southampton City Council

In Southampton, the monthly average number of local families placed in Bed and Breakfasts (B&Bs) is increasing; in 2011/12 there was an average of 6.7 families placed in B&Bs per month but this had almost doubled to 10.5 in 2017/18. This increase is thought to be due to lack of available private rented accommodation to move into. Households with more complex needs makes rehousing harder. Currently SCC are able to stay within the 6 week legal limit, families are always placed into B&B with a move on plan and are supported very carefully. The cost of B&B accommodation to the council in 2016/17 was £46,070 rising to £51,813 in 2017/18.

The 2011 Census data showed a total of 98,254 households in the city, of which 50.8% are owner occupied, 24.9% are privately rented, 16.9% are local authority rented and 6.3% are housing association. This represents around 24,500 privately rented homes across the city, including around 7,000 homes of multiple occupancy. Southampton has a higher percentage of privately rented accommodation than England (16.8% nationally) and below the average number of owner occupied homes (64.1% nationally).

The comparatively high numbers of people living in private rented sector properties may be due to Southampton being a university city, Bournemouth has a private rented percentage of 30%, Portsmouth 24.7% and Bristol 23.5%. However it can also be seen to contribute to the risks of homelessness for residents. The most common reasons for homelessness in Southampton is the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy (AST) which is the most common form of tenancy within the private rented sector.

Figure 3.3.15



### 3.3.7 Personal causes of homelessness

There are also a number of *personal* factors which may increase risk of homelessness. Homeless Link collect data from Health Needs Audits for the homeless which are carried out largely by Local Authorities between 2011 and 2015 (some audits may have been done by CCGs). The results cover a total of 27 individual Health Needs Audits undertaken across England and a total of 3,355 respondents<sup>30</sup>.

Figure 3.3.16 summaries the health needs by sleeping location. When viewing this data it should be noted that in some cases percentages are based on small numbers (especially in the case where people are in emergency/temporary accommodation, own home and other), and so should be interpreted with some caution. The health needs are most prominent amongst those who are rough sleeping and are in hostel accommodation. A mental health difficulty is reported by over 80% of people in each sleeping location and is as high as 92% among people who are sleeping rough, with just under half (45%) reporting a diagnosed mental health condition.

<sup>30</sup> Homeless Link, *Health Needs Audit – explore the data*, [Online] Available from: <https://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/homelessness-in-numbers/health-needs-audit-explore-data> [Accessed 19 March 2018].

Figure 3.3.16 Health needs of respondents taking part in Health Needs Audits, England, 2011-2015

|   | Current sleeping location |                          |                |                       |        |                        |            |       |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------|------------------------|------------|-------|
|   | Overall                   | Sofa surfing / squatting | Rough sleeping | Emergency / temporary | Hostel | 2nd stage / supported* | Own home** | Other |
| Smokes  | 78%                       | 77.3%                    | 83.0%          | 70.9%                 | 81.0%  | 74.7%                  | 69.5%      | 68.8% |
| Alcohol problem   | 27%                       | 24.6%                    | 44.5%          | 18.4%                 | 31.0%  | 21.5%                  | 24.4%      | 20.0% |
| Uses drugs or in recovery                               | 41%                       | 44.9%                    | 53.5%          | 26.3%                 | 46.1%  | 35.2%                  | 33.8%      | 53.1% |
| Diagnosed mental health condition                       | 44%                       | 38.2%                    | 45.1%          | 40.2%                 | 45.1%  | 44.2%                  | 44.3%      | 35.5% |
| Reported a mental health difficulty                     | 86%                       | 84.8%                    | 91.5%          | 84.2%                 | 85.1%  | 86.8%                  | 87.3%      | 80.6% |
| Reported a physical health problem                      | 78%                       | 76.4%                    | 87.6%          | 80.6%                 | 76.7%  | 75.5%                  | 81.0%      | 67.7% |
| Reported long term physical health problem (>12 months) | 44%                       | 43.7%                    | 49.1%          | 45.7%                 | 42.9%  | 46.3%                  | 44.3%      | 35.5% |
| All respondents   |                           | 9.3%                     | 9.1%           | 6.2%                  | 41.0%  | 28.1%                  | 5.3%       | 1.0%  |

Source: Homeless Link

\*People who have moved to accommodation where they would receive less support than in, for example, a hostel, but are still receiving some support. \*\* People who have been homeless, are now in their own home but are still receiving support or are still at risk of homelessness.

Figure 3.3.17 shows health problems in Southampton compared to England, showing slightly higher rates of long-term health problems or disability and higher rates of long-term mental health problems. Although smoking is unlikely to be a direct cause of homelessness, it can lead to long term health problems which are.

Figure 3.3.17: Physical and mental health in Southampton and England

| Indicator   | Year    | Southampton | England |
|---|---------|-------------|---------|
| Long-term health problem or disability - All ages (A) | 2011    | 16.2%       | 17.6%   |
| Long-term mental health problems - 18+ yrs. (B)       | 2016/17 | 7.2%        | 5.7%    |
| Smoking prevalence in adults - 18+ yrs. (C)           | 2016    | 17.8%       | 15.5%   |

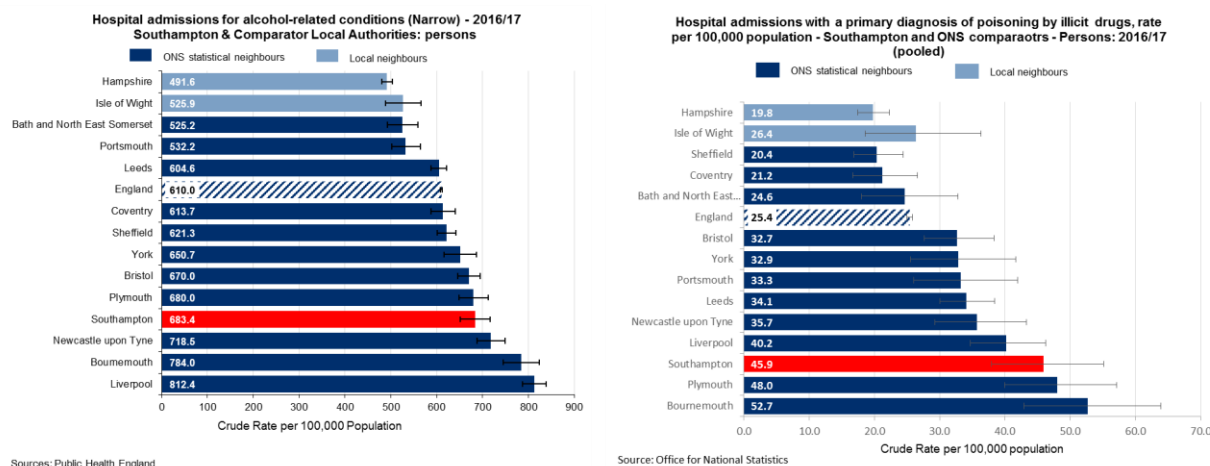
Source: A: 2011 Census, B: GP Patient Survey, C: Annual Population Survey

Amongst all groups in the Health Needs Audits data, the percentage who reported using drugs or being in drug recovery is higher than those who reported an alcohol problem, although it is not possible to tell from the data if any of these problems were developed before or after the person became homeless. Crisis write that problems with drugs or alcohol can be part of a person's spiral into homelessness and cite studies showing that two-thirds of people say drugs or alcohol use was a reason that they first became homeless and those who use drugs are seven times more likely to become homeless<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Crisis *Drugs and Alcohol* [Online] Available from: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/health-and-wellbeing/drugs-and-alcohol/> [Accessed on 20 April 2018].

Figure 3.3.18 shows hospital admissions for both alcohol and poisoning by illicit drugs in 2016/17; in both cases Southampton has a higher rate than England and is amongst the highest compared to similar areas. Therefore, drug and alcohol misuse are likely to present a significant risk for increased levels of homelessness in Southampton.

Figure 3.3.18



In addition, Shelter<sup>32</sup> suggest that having parents with drug or alcohol problems can be a contributory factor to homelessness in later life. Data is collected by local authorities on referrals and assessments carried out by children’s social care services, including the factors that are an issue for that child. When looking at this data it should be kept in mind that more than one factor can be recorded for each child and a child may have more than one assessment in a year. Also the data below does not identify the type of involvement; for example where alcohol is identified this may be the child drinking, the parent drinking or another person living in the household drinking. However, local analysis of the data for Southampton shows that in the majority of cases it is the parents who are using alcohol or drugs. Figure 3.3.19 shows the proportion of cases where alcohol or drug misuse are raised as a factor for Southampton and comparator areas. Domestic violence is also included as it is a risk factor for future homelessness (see Figure 3.3.24).

The data does indicate that Southampton has one of the highest proportions of children’s assessments which include alcohol misuse (22.5%) and drugs misuse (26.4%) as a factor. In addition, in more than half of assessments (52.2%), domestic violence is recorded as a factor. It is possible that this data could be used to identify children at risk of future homelessness and put in prevention measures sooner. Local data from SCC shows that the number made statutory homeless because of domestic violence has remained fairly consistent at between 17-27 between 2011/12 and 2017/18, with the number recorded during 2017/18 being amongst the lowest (18 cases).

<sup>32</sup> Shelter *What causes homelessness?*, [Online] Available from: [http://england.shelter.org.uk/campaigns/\\_why\\_we\\_campaign/tackling\\_homelessness/What\\_causes\\_homelessness](http://england.shelter.org.uk/campaigns/_why_we_campaign/tackling_homelessness/What_causes_homelessness) [Accessed 24 January 2018].

Figure 3.3.19 Individual factors raised in assessments by Children's Social Care Services as a percentage of all factors and rank (1 is the highest).

| Comparator Areas             | Factors        |      |             |      |                   |      |
|------------------------------|----------------|------|-------------|------|-------------------|------|
|                              | Alcohol misuse |      | Drug misuse |      | Domestic violence |      |
|                              | %              | Rank | %           | Rank | %                 | Rank |
| Bath and North East Somerset | 22.6%          | 3    | 25.5%       | 4    | 50.3%             | 7    |
| Bournemouth                  | 17.0%          | 9    | 16.6%       | 9    | 28.3%             | 13   |
| Bristol                      | 22.5%          | 5    | 32.8%       | 1    | 68.3%             | 1    |
| Coventry                     | 23.7%          | 2    | 26.3%       | 3    | 56.3%             | 3    |
| England                      | 18.0%          | 7    | 19.7%       | 8    | 49.9%             | 8    |
| Hampshire                    | 6.9%           | 14   | 7.2%        | 14   | 21.8%             | 14   |
| Isle of Wight                | 12.5%          | 11   | 12.7%       | 12   | 32.2%             | 11   |
| Leeds                        | 10.5%          | 13   | 10.7%       | 13   | 48.1%             | 9    |
| Liverpool                    | 12.2%          | 12   | 15.3%       | 10   | 31.6%             | 12   |
| Newcastle upon Tyne          | 23.9%          | 1    | 24.5%       | 5    | 52.2%             | 4    |
| Plymouth                     | 18.5%          | 6    | 23.7%       | 6    | 56.9%             | 2    |
| Portsmouth                   | 3.9%           | 15   | 5.4%        | 15   | 20.8%             | 15   |
| Sheffield                    | 17.9%          | 8    | 22.7%       | 7    | 51.8%             | 6    |
| Southampton                  | 22.5%          | 4    | 26.4%       | 2    | 52.2%             | 5    |
| York                         | 14.8%          | 10   | 14.9%       | 11   | 34.4%             | 10   |

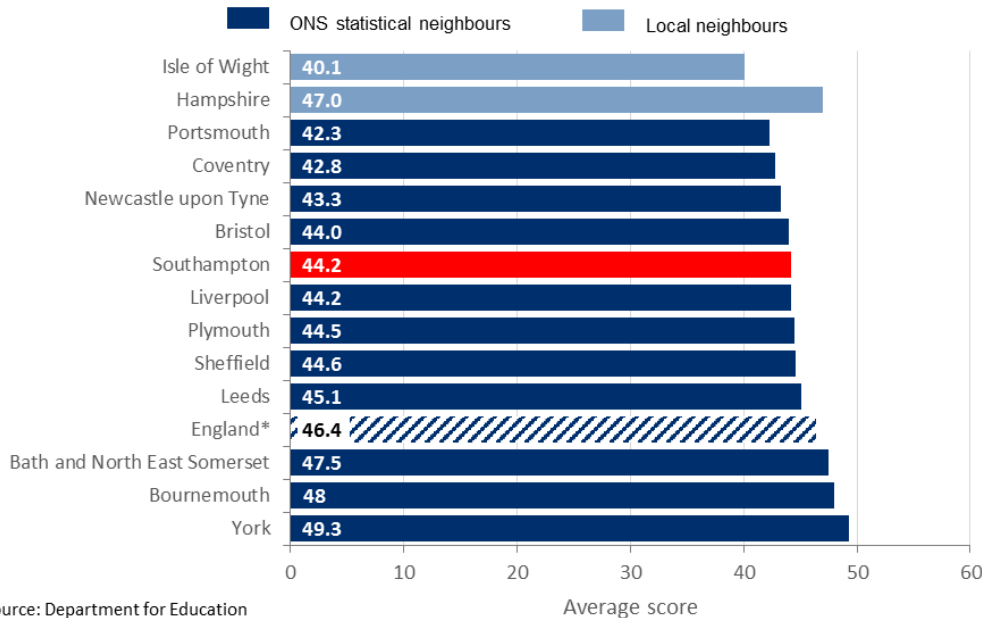
Source: Department for Education

Another personal cause of homelessness can be educational attainment. Attainment 8 are part of the new secondary accountability system implemented from 2016, which measures a student's average grade across eight subjects. A school's Attainment 8 score is the average of all of its students' scores. Students do not have to take 8 subjects, but they score zero for any unfilled slots<sup>33</sup>. Figure 3.3.20 shows the average Attainment 8 score, an average of a pupil's best 8 Performance Table eligible qualifications with a higher average indicating higher results. The average score for Southampton was 44.2 which is below the average score for England (46.4) and among the lowest for comparator groups.

<sup>33</sup> AQA, Attainment 8, [Online]: <https://tinyurl.com/ybd4a8t4> Accessed on 25/10/2017

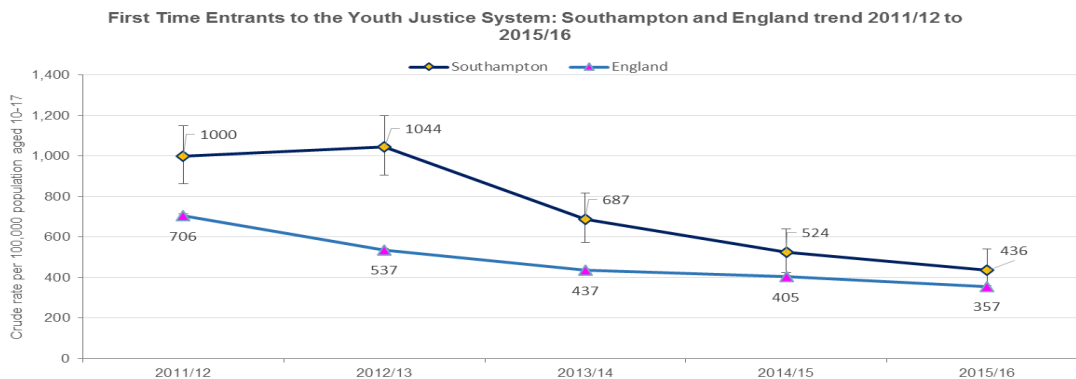
Figure 3.3.20

**Key stage 4: Average Attainment 8 score in state funded schools. Southampton and ONS comparators 2016/17 (revised)**



Getting involved in crime at an early age is a risk factor for future homelessness. First-time entrants (FTEs) to the youth justice system in Southampton have fallen for the fourth year running, although the rate of decrease is slowing. The decrease in FTEs in England is decreasing at a slower rate, meaning the gap between the two is narrowing (Figure 3.3.21). The success of the Joint Decision Making Panel in Southampton has been key to reducing rates of FTEs, as has the Youth Offending Service’s (YOS) alignment locally within the Early Help Service which gives support to families in the early years of a child’s life or as family problems begin to develop.

Figure 3.3.21



Source: Youth Justice Management Information System



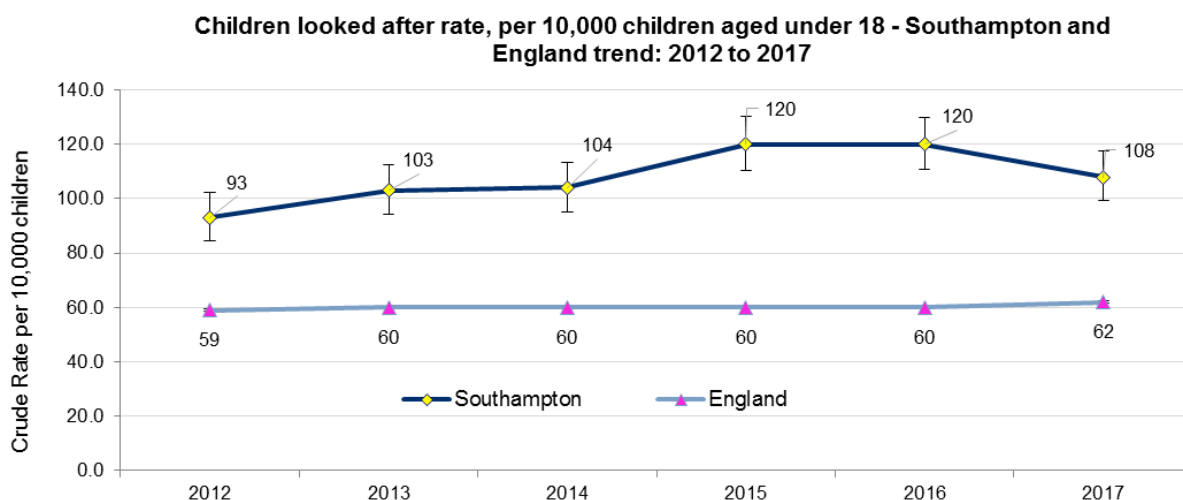


An institutional background including having been in care, the armed forces, or in prison is another risk factor. Getting involved in crime at an early age is a risk factor for future homelessness. First-time entrants (FTEs) to the youth justice system in Southampton have fallen for the third year running, although the rate of decrease is slowing (Figure 3.3.21).

In June 2017 Southampton City Council started a tracker system which records referrals for accommodation needs from prisons and probation services. Since the service started until April 2018 there have been 74 new referrals onto the tracker system although this may include people being referred multiple times, people stay on the system until they have been able to find stable accommodation. Between June 2017 and April 2018, 24 people have been accepted into emergency accommodation, for an additional 30 people their outcomes were not known which could mean they are still in prison or found their own housing solution. These figures almost certainly under report the numbers of people who have left prison and are homeless, as the figures do not reflect people being released after short sentences, or those who were not referred by probation and the prison services.

Data on the number of veterans in the city is not readily available. Crude estimates are that 9.1% of the city's population are veterans compared to 11.4% in Portsmouth. SCC do not routinely ask if people applying for housing or making an application as homeless have ever served in the military, making data on this hard to collate. However, members of the local Veterans breakfast club have anecdotally identified veterans who have been living in unsuitable accommodation or sofa surfing. Simon Western House, a bespoke 12 bed unit in Southampton for veterans leaving the criminal justice system, recently closed which may mean more homelessness among veterans<sup>34</sup>.

Figure 3.3.22



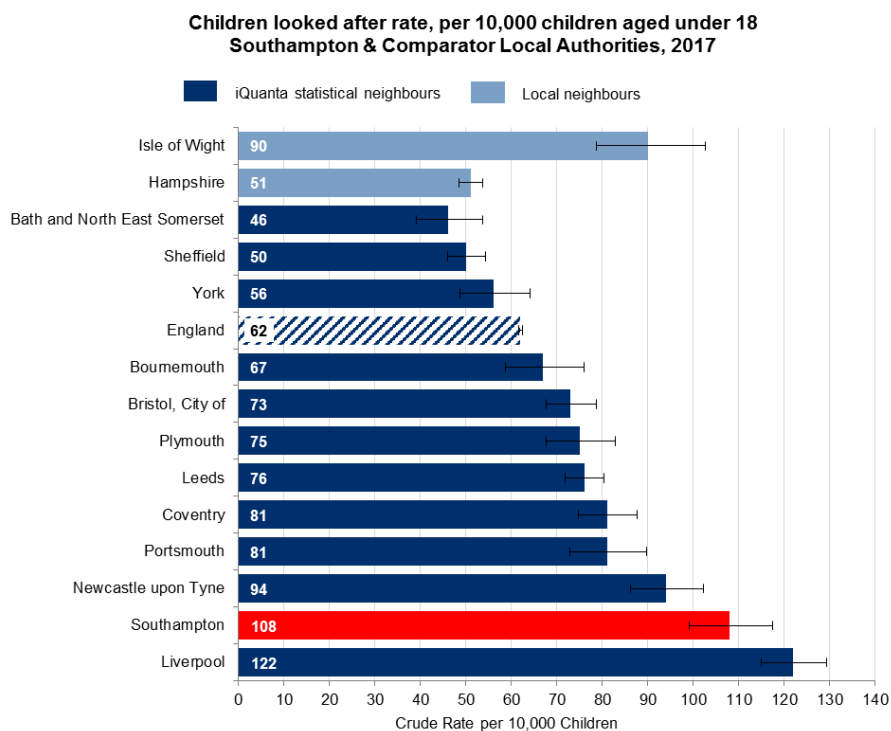
Sources: Department for Education

<sup>34</sup> Hopper, C (2018) *Armed Forces Needs Assessment*, publishing date TBC.



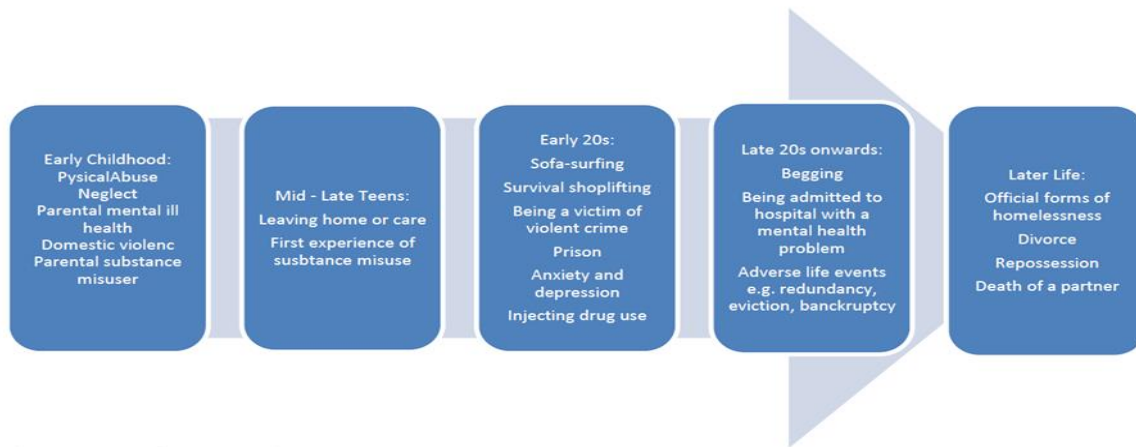
In Southampton the rate of looked after children is significantly higher than the rate for England, although 2017 saw a slight decline in the rate. Amongst comparator areas Southampton has the second highest rate meaning that it possibly has more children with a future risk of homelessness than comparator areas (Figure 3.3.22).

Figure 3.3.23



The review by PHE site studies which seek to identify the pattern and nature of multiple exclusion homelessness (MEH) across the UK. The study found that people have experienced MEH if they have been 'homeless' (including experience of temporary/unsuitable accommodation as well as sleeping rough) and have also experienced one or more types of deep social exclusion which includes: substance misuse (drug, alcohol or solvent misuse); participation in street culture activities (begging, street drinking, survival shoplifting or sex work); most of these issues have been discussed above. Below is a flow diagram showing where in the life course the MEH are most likely to occur which then increase the likelihood of a person experiencing homelessness and other complex issues such as mental ill health and substance misuse which could be used for targeting interventions. The PHE report makes clear, as many other reports have, that Adverse Childhood Experiences are a root cause of much future vulnerability.

Figure 3.3.24



### 3.3.8 Key findings

- Both *structural* and *personal* factors play a part in homelessness. In Southampton in 2016/17 half of acceptances were rooted in the end of an AST and half are due to interpersonal issues and risks.
- *Structural* causes include the availability and affordability of housing. Southampton has less affordable housing than England as a whole and is in the top 5 least affordable areas among its ONS comparators.
- In Southampton the LHA amounts are lower than lowest quartile of rental prices showing that rental prices in Southampton are clearly unattainable for some lower income families even with the help of LHA.
- The units of private accommodation SCC have access to through private landlords has been decreasing, with 129 units available that year and only 21 available in 2017/18.
- In 2011/12 there was an average of 6.7 families placed in B&Bs per month but this had almost doubled to 10.5 in 2017/18.
- Low income and poverty are also key structural risk factors, which are particularly important in Southampton. In 2017 Southampton had a higher percentage of children living in poverty (30.3%) than the England average (27.3%). In addition, Southampton has some of the most income deprived neighbourhoods in the country.
- The gross weekly full-time pay for residents of Southampton is £521, which is lower than the England average (£556) and significantly lower than the Hampshire average (£604).
- These levels of child poverty and lower levels of income may be contributing to an increased risk of homelessness for residents in the city. In addition, the lower levels of disposable income in the city, means that any rent rises and/or house price rises are likely to have a greater impact.
- *Personal* factors are also key risk factors for homelessness. National data shows that a mental health difficulty is reported by 92% of people who are sleeping rough, with just under half (45%) reporting a diagnosed mental health condition. Problems with the misuse of alcohol and drugs were also widely reported.
- Having parents with drug or alcohol problems can be a contributory factor to homelessness in later life; data from children's social care services shows that Southampton has one of the

highest proportions of children's assessments which include alcohol misuse (22.5%) and drugs misuse (26.4%) as a factor.

- Poor educational attainment and getting involved in crime at an early age are also risk factors for future homelessness. Educational attainment is below average in Southampton, whilst first-time entrants (FTEs) to the youth justice system in Southampton have fallen for the fourth year running, although the rate of decrease is slowing.

### 3.4 Homelessness Prevention and Support

The report by Crisis<sup>35</sup> highlights the extent to which a local authority employs the full range of prevention measures as having a strong influence on homeless acceptances. All local authorities in England are required to have a strategy for preventing homelessness as outlined in the 2002 Homelessness Act<sup>36</sup>. The strategy must apply to everyone at risk of homelessness, not just people who are unintentionally homeless and fall within a priority need groups. Authorities are also encouraged to take steps to relieve homelessness in cases where someone has been found to be homeless but is not owed a duty to secure accommodation under the homelessness legislation.

#### 3.4.1 Homelessness preventions

The prevention services include providing advice for debt relief, mediation between tenants and landlords and also working with families to prevent young people from becoming homeless. Figure 3.4.1 shows homelessness preventions in Southampton (as measured by cases where positive preventative action was taken) compared to other similar local authorities; Southampton has the fifth highest rate among comparator areas and is higher than the England average.

However, figure 3.4.2 illustrates how Southampton has seen 19.8% decrease in the number of homelessness preventions from 1,149 in 2015/16 to 922 in 2016/17, which followed a 20.3% decrease the year before. Nationally there was a 3% decrease in preventions between 2014/15 and 2015/16 followed by a 0.7% increase between 2015/16 and 2016/17. Provisional local data for 2017/18 shows that preventions in Southampton have increased by 12% but are not as high as they were in 2015/16.

<sup>35</sup> Fitzpatrick. S, Pawson. H, Bramley. G, Wilcox. S, and Watts. B, (2017) *The homelessness monitor: England 2017*, Crisis, [Online] Available from:

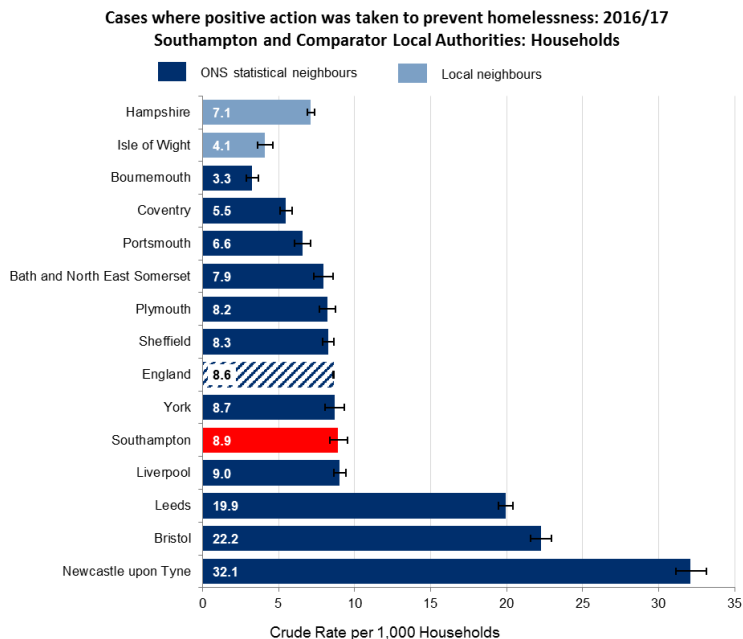
[https://crisis.org.uk/media/236823/homelessness\\_monitor\\_england\\_2017.pdf](https://crisis.org.uk/media/236823/homelessness_monitor_england_2017.pdf) [Accessed 27 February 2018].

<sup>36</sup> GOV.UK (2013) *Homelessness data: notes and definitions*, [Online] Available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions#homelessness-prevention-and-relief> [Accessed 27 February 2018].

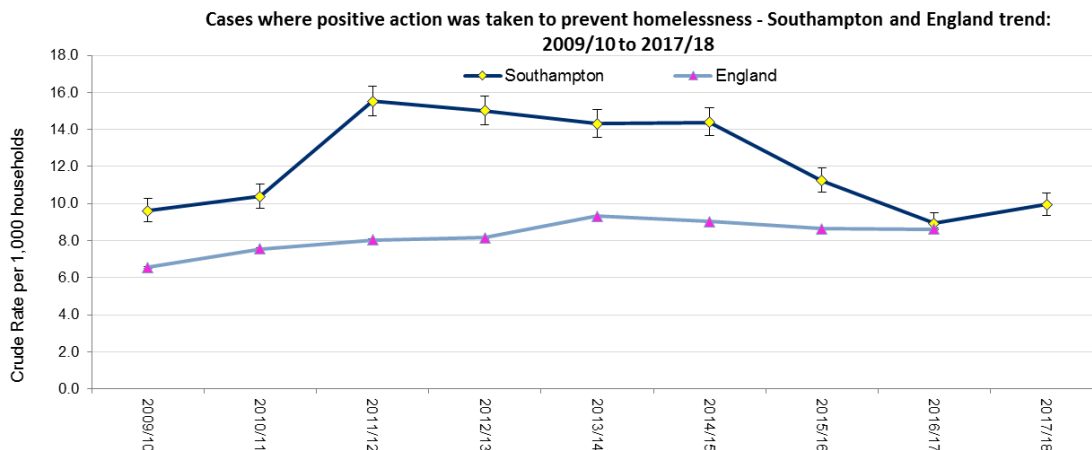


Figure 3.4.1



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government

Figure 3.4.2



Sources: Department for Communities and Local Government

Note: 2017/18 data for Southampton is local data as national data was not available at date of publication.

The charity Crisis conducted a survey of local authorities and found that (based on a 50% response rate), despite the majority (67%) reporting an increase to prevention service Housing Options, only 8% of local authorities had seen an increase in budget with 72% reporting no change to the budget<sup>37</sup>, Southampton City Council has seen a reduction in budget although there has now been an increase

<sup>37</sup> Fitzpatrick. S, Pawson. H, Bramley. G, Wilcox. S, and Watts. B, (2017) *The homelessness monitor: England 2017*, Crisis, [Online] Available from: [https://crisis.org.uk/media/236823/homelessness\\_monitor\\_england\\_2017.pdf](https://crisis.org.uk/media/236823/homelessness_monitor_england_2017.pdf) [Accessed 27 February 2018].



due to the costs of introducing the Homelessness Reduction Act. The falling trend of preventions in Southampton may be a reflection of the increased local demand if more people are competing for housing and housing stock is not increasing to meet that demand, fewer preventions will take place; however, the increase in 2017/18 may be an indication that this is improving.

One of the ways that SCC seeks to prevent homelessness is by helping people secure accommodation in the private sector by either underwriting a bond or using prevention funds to enable households to secure accommodation for themselves with a deposit/rent in advance or a finder's fee. This offers a greater degree of flexibility for landlords and tenants. Bonds and use of deposits are a cheaper alternative to the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

Housing bonds are a guaranteed sum that will cover damage caused to the property or rent arrears lawfully due to the landlord by the tenant. This is a guaranteed sum in lieu of payment. More households can be assisted with accommodation this way as a multiplier of funds which makes issuing bonds a cheaper option. Bonds to assist households secure accommodation have decreased by 78% from 2009/10 to 2016/17 reducing from 184 to 40. This could be due to a reduction in budgets and also landlords selling properties.

Households can be assisted with deposits from prevention funds where they have found their own accommodation. This option can be used for a wider range of households or for those who have been made intentionally homeless. In 2016/17, there were 113 households assisted with a deposit/rent in advance and finder's Fee, the highest number recorded between 2009/10 and 2016/17.

Calls to Homelessness Advice and Homeseekers services have increased by 17% since 2011/12 with the largest increases being the 77% increase for emergency interviews (people who arrive in crisis – e.g. bailiffs, unlawful eviction, parents no longer willing, fire, flood, natural disaster) and interviews for the Homeseekers Lettings Service (47% increase), which is part of the homelessness unit and looks after all of the temporary accommodation, plus issue of bonds for privately rented. It is thought that the increase is due to the impact of the introduction of the benefit cap and Universal Credit. Debt and benefit referrals received by Welfare Rights and the Money Advice Unit are at their highest since 2013/14 (574 in 2017/18). The Housing Advice Service and Outreach Mediation have seen a 25% decrease in the number of enquiries between 2011/12 and 2016/17. The majority of their enquiries are for debt preventions which have increased by 30% and end of AST enquires, which have seen a decrease of 36% over the same time period. Between 2015/16 and 2016/17 there was a decrease of 27% of AST enquires, all end of AST's went directly to the homelessness team to work on them for prevention. In 2015/16 this role was transferred to the mediation team which may account for the decrease. SCC records the numbers of people subject to the benefit cap requiring homelessness assistance, numbers were at their highest in 2016/17, having increased 160% since first recorded in 2013/14, although there was a decrease during 2017/18 with recorded numbers currently at 195.

### 3.4.2 Homelessness support

An example of how SCC have worked to prevent homelessness is the creation of a benefit cap task force which was created before the second round of the benefit cap was introduced in August and September 2016. The task force included members from housing, the income team, housing benefit and voluntary agencies who put together a list of families likely to be affected by the cap. They then visited as many of the families as possible and offered them support to ensure that they did not lose their accommodation which included referrals to employment support agencies and helping them to complete forms for Personal Independence Payment (PIP, replacing the Disability Living Allowance). Also if families were fully engaging in the process then it was agreed that Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs – provide extra money when a council decides that someone needs extra help to meet their housing costs), could be used to help them deal with the cap whilst they tried to find employment or were waiting for applications to be assessed. It was also agreed that in cases where employment was not currently an option (i.e. single parent families with new born children), they could utilise DHP for a longer period till work became a realistic option. To date out of the large amount of families affected only a very small amount have ended up coming through as homeless. Some of the other prevention services available in Southampton are detailed below with more information available in Appendix A.

### 3.4.3 The Homeless Vulnerable Adult Support Team Service

Southampton City Council work with and commission a variety of different frontline services who have contact with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Links with these services ensure that anyone identified as homeless receive the support they need. A summary of services available in Southampton is included in Appendix A.

A review of housing related support (HRS) commissioned services was undertaken in 2016 and covered young people, vulnerable adults and older people. The review of HRS has shown the services available in Southampton provide fairly comprehensive services to an ever increasing number of people with decreasing levels of resources. Services are well respected, of good to high quality and meet the needs of those vulnerable people they are engaged with.

The review showed there has been a 25% increase in the number of individuals supported across all HRS contracts, rising from 1584 in 2014/15 to 2126 in 2015/16. Service utilisation is predominantly around 95%- 100%, with the lowest reported utilisation (full year) at 83% in 2014/15 and 73% in 2015/16.

The following is a summary of findings from the review and captured in the HRS commissioning intentions (2016-2019) and should be considered in any future funding proposals and commissioning intentions.

- A recognition that moving is a difficult experience, so the focus should be on individuals getting their own settled home as a key outcome at the earliest opportunity.



- That services need to be focused on the needs of the individual not any specific client group.
- There should be a simplified pathway to reduce voids, increase options and support individual needs as flexibly as possible.
- There is a need to provide high quality safe services that maximise opportunity, outcomes and reduces voids against reducing commissioning resources.
- All individuals eligible for HRS have consistent and equitable access to services.
- The range of outcomes that are measurable and achieved needs to be improved.
- There is a lack of detailed knowledge and evidence in some key areas that limit the ability to form fully robust commissioning intentions. These areas need to be examined in more detail and include re-presentation, links between health and housing, the role of HRS alongside wider support services and the links between a much wider network of housing options and landlords.

#### *3.4.4 Severe Weather Emergency Provision*

Southampton City Council provide a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol responses in order to prevent deaths of people sleeping rough during winter. In 2017/18, Severe Weather Emergency Provision beds (SWEP) were available for people who were sleeping rough from November 2017 till the end of March 2018, even during periods where the weather was not considered 'severe'. This was in response to the number of people who were using this provision and benefiting, not only from a place to sleep during the night, but also from support packages and pathways which were offered alongside it. Between November 2017 and March 2018 146 people were offered a bed and support to secure other accommodation.

#### *3.4.5 The Beds, Begging and Business Conference*

As well as commissioning services through the ICU to help support the homeless, Southampton is also taking a partnership approach to ensure that support services for people who sleep rough are joined up across the statutory, voluntary and faith organisations. In November 2017 a conference, led by a network of local voluntary and faith based organisations, brought together a broad range of interested parties to discuss and explore ways of approaching the issue of people sleeping rough, begging and homelessness in the context of 'beds, begging and businesses'. During the conference delegates explored the impacts of people who are sleeping rough on businesses and whether public giving helps or hinders an individual's route out of sleeping rough and homelessness. The culmination of the event was agreement that there were 5 areas of work that could be taken forward:

1. Developing a local Charter or similar statement of intent for Southampton
2. Coordination of voluntary and faith services – meals, essential supplies etc.
3. Adopting the Street Support web-based service operating in other areas
4. Exploring opportunities to increase the bed supply, both short and long term.
5. Engaging the user voice and lived experiences.



This work will continue to help shape and improve services for people who are sleeping rough in the city in the future. Currently, Southampton have a range of different services which have been designed to support people who are homeless or may become at risk of homelessness and they have been catalogued at Appendix A.

#### 3.4.6 Key findings

- Southampton has the fifth highest rate of homelessness preventions among comparator areas and is higher than the England average. However Southampton has seen 19.8% decrease in the number of homelessness preventions from 1,149 in 2015/16 to 922 in 2016/17, which followed a 20.3% decrease the year before.
- Calls to Homelessness Advice and Homeseekers services have increased by 17% since 2011/12 with the largest increases being the 77% increase for emergency interviews and interviews for the Homeseekers Lettings Service (47% increase).
- A comprehensive 'menu' of the homelessness support offered by service providers and organisations across the city is available in appendix A.

## 4. Reviewing the last strategy

### 4.1 Homelessness Prevention Survey

Southampton City Council developed a Homelessness Prevention Survey for key stakeholders across the city, who have first-hand experience in addressing issues around homelessness in Southampton. The survey was live for 3 weeks from 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018, and then extended for a further week to allow people more time to respond, officially closing on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018. In total, 33 stakeholders completed the survey, including representatives from Southampton City Council, No Limits, Go Southampton, Solent NHS Trust, The Salvation Army, The Society of St James and many other organisations, as well as a face to face engagement with the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Company (see Appendix B for more information).

The consultation identified the following challenges which should be considered when rewriting the Homelessness Prevention Strategy:

- Lack of housing stock featured as a key issue in the stakeholder feedback, with 17 out of 33 people (51%) stating that lack of housing stock was an impact on homelessness. In addition, 16 (48%) people noted the reduction in funding and resource was also an issue.
- From the survey 18 people, a total of 54% of respondents, commented on the need for good quality accommodation and 16 people felt there should be more affordable housing.
- A total of 22 stakeholders spoke of emergency accommodation in Southampton, 12 of which felt there should be more short-term accommodation and emergency provision available.
- A total of 24 people discussed how more private landlords are needed to balance demand of accommodation for those who are homeless and 14 people agreed more cooperation is needed between organisations and private landlords.
- Overall 54 comments were made with regard to preventative support for the homeless and 18 stakeholders suggested better partnership working is necessary to reduce homelessness. A total of 16 stakeholders (48%) said more funding for services is required to prevent homelessness.
- Support for vulnerable people was the most important thing according to 9 stakeholders and so is support for individuals with complex needs, 8 people felt that there should be better outcomes for people who have been evicted and who have problems with substance misuse.
- The feedback reflected the strength of local support services, with this being highlighted by respondents as an opportunity to build on success.
- Government initiatives, such as No Second Night Out and a Housing First type approach, received positive feedback as 8 stakeholders in total commented they should continue going forward. In terms of progressing a Housing First type approach, 12% of stakeholders (4 people) indicated this could help homelessness in Southampton and 12% (4 people) supported No Second Night Out.

- A total of 16 people (48%) commented on the need to reduce the number of people sleeping rough in the city, with 5 (15%) stakeholders stating that more should be done to communicate successes to the public.
- The survey had an under representation in its responses from services which assist and support families, with only 7 stakeholder commenting about provisions for families. This does not necessarily, however, reflect the amount of provision for families in the area.

## 4.2 Update on priority indicators

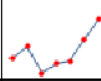
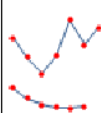
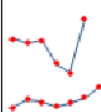
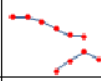
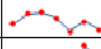

The Homelessness Prevention Strategy for 2013-18 included fourteen priority indicators to be monitored, these are summarised over the next two pages with trends showing the progress that has been made. The priority indicators are mainly referred to throughout the report, for example the numbers accepted as being homeless and in priority need is discussed in section 3.1 and homelessness prevention is discussed in section 3.4. The priority indicators look at trends from 2011/12 to 2016/17 (or 2017/18 if data is available), and show what has been mentioned previously in the report, that rates of homelessness are showing an overall upward trend with a notable increase in homelessness among those aged 16-24. Upward trends are also seen in the debt and benefit referrals and the numbers of people subject to the benefit cap receiving homelessness assistance.

An indicator which appears in the priority indicators but is not mentioned elsewhere in the report is the vouchers provided by food banks. Each person on the voucher is given food and clothes so the numbers represent the number of incidents where a person was fed and clothed, a person would be counted every time that they are fed and clothed. The increase in people who were fed and clothed between 2011/12 and 2017/18 was 105%.

The other two indicators which are not discussed elsewhere in the report are the court possession hearings and evictions of social housing tenants which peaked at 125 in 2014/15 and has now reduced to 88 in 2016/17. The households placed in housing in Southampton by local authorities is not mentioned elsewhere in the report as the numbers are small, fewer than 10 families placed annually over the last three years.



| Update on priority indicators outlined in the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2013/18 |   |  |            |            |            |            |            |            |       |
|--|---|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------|
| Number   | Priority indicator  | 2011/12  | 2012/13    | 2013/14    | 2014/15    | 2015/16    | 2016/17    | 2017/18    | Trend |
| 1  | <b>Closely monitor the incidence of statutory homelessness and homelessness prevention numbers.</b>   |  |            |            |            |            |            |            |       |
|  | Households accepted as being homeless and in priority need - Crude rate per 1,000 households  | 1.9  | 2.0        | 1.7        | 1.8        | 1.5        | 2.5        | 2.5        |       |
|  | Cases where positive action was taken to prevent homelessness - Crude rate per 1,000 households   | 15.5   | 15.0       | 14.3       | 14.4       | 11.2       | 8.9        | 9.9        |       |
| 2  | <b>Liaise with Housing Benefit, Private Sector housing team and maintain landlord forums to seek to identify the numbers of landlords in the private rented sector no longer housing our clients.</b> |  |            |            |            |            |            |            |       |
|  | Units of private accommodation SCC have access to through private landlords   | 90   | 129        | 92         | 67         | 67         | 40         | 21         |       |
| 3  | <b>Monitor court possession hearings and evictions of social housing tenants.</b>   |  | 93         | 124        | 125        | 89         | 88         |            |       |
| 4  | <b>Track any rise in numbers of families approaching services, who are unable to afford their accommodation.</b>  | No recording mechanism was put in place to track this information. |            |            |            |            |            |            |       |
| 5  | <b>Record increases in use of B&amp;B temporary accommodation, by volume, length of stay and the cost to the Council.</b>   |  |            |            |            |            |            |            |       |
|  | Number of households placed   | 109  | 90         | 108        | 104        | 87         | 93         | 96         |       |
|  | Average length of stay  | 6.7  | 5.9        | 6.5        | 7.7        | 10.5       | 11.6       | 10.5       |       |
|  | Cost to the council   | £26,140.00   | £24,382.00 | £25,460.00 | £30,664.00 | £19,487.00 | £46,070.00 | £51,813.00 |       |
| 6  | <b>Investigate increase in displaced homeless applicants moving to our area through local authority notifications and via referral from services such as Health Visitors.</b>                         |  |            |            |            |            |            |            |       |
|  | Households placed by other Local Authorities  |  |            |            | 12         | 7          | 7          | 8          |       |
| 7  | <b>Track the dependence on food banks by amount of local welfare assistance and grant funds used.</b>   |  |            |            |            |            |            |            |       |
|  | Vouchers provided   | 4881   | 6440       | 9784       | 9130       | 8132       | 8656       | 10006      |       |

| Number | Priority indicator   | 2011/12  | 2012/13     | 2013/14     | 2014/15     | 2015/16     | 2016/17     | 2017/18 | Trend   |
|--------|--|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------|---|
| 8      | <b>Monitor the number of casework enquiries from families with financial and debt problems.</b><br>Debt and benefit referrals received by Welfare Rights and the Money Advice Unit   | 478  | 506         | 440         | 463         | 469         | 525         | 574     |    |
| 9      | <b>Track the increase in families overcrowding themselves in smaller accommodation through the Housing Register, social care agencies and Health Visiting teams.</b>   | No recording mechanism was put in place to track this information. |             |             |             |             |             |         |   |
| 10     | <b>Monitor rough sleeping numbers by regular street outreach counts and numbers of people accessing the Day Centre.</b><br>Autumn rough sleeping counts and estimates, rate per 1,000 households<br>Number of people seen at the Day Centre  | 0.2<br>2380  | 0.2<br>1977 | 0.1<br>1725 | 0.2<br>1645 | 0.3<br>1596 | 0.2<br>1657 | 0.3     |    |
| 11     | <b>Profile the ages of clients found on street counts and log numbers accessing specific services such as No Limits to track any rises in young people becoming homeless.</b><br>Homeless Young People Aged 16-24, crude rate per 1,000 households<br>Young people accessing No Limits | 0.7<br>4785  | 0.7<br>5991 | 0.7<br>5512 | 0.6<br>4971 | 0.6<br>5423 | 0.8<br>6229 | 0.8     |   |
| 12     | <b>Record numbers of young people provided with supported housing that prevents them becoming homeless and the numbers of pathway housing plans completed prior to leaving care.</b><br>Number of young people housed long term<br>Pathways referring care leavers into homelessness   | 77   | 75          | 64          | 43          | 25          | 22          | 55      |  |
| 13     | <b>Plot any rise in people fleeing domestic violence against homelessness causes.</b><br>Number made statutory homeless because of domestic violence   | 21   | 26          | 27          | 24          | 17          | 22          | 18      |  |
| 14     | <b>Record the numbers of people subject to the benefit cap requiring homelessness assistance.</b>  |  |             | 105         | 62          | 7           | 273         | 195     |  |

## 5. Future projections

Statutory homelessness in Southampton and applications for homelessness had been showing a downward trend since 2009/10 for statutory homelessness and from 2011/12 for applications. The decline ended in 2016/17 which saw a significant increase in both applications and acceptances and a decline in preventions for the second consecutive year. This implies that the reasons behind this are structural rather than due to an increase in population, possibly due to lack affordable housing which makes preventions harder. However local figures for 2017/18 show an increase in preventions whereas acceptances are plateauing.

It is difficult to predict future demand with any level of certainty. However, if current trends continued it would be expected that acceptances would continue at the higher rate or rise if structural factors, such as rental prices continue to rise faster than benefits and the availability of properties continues to be problematic. The higher levels of personal causes of homelessness within the city may also indicate that rates of homelessness in the city will rise. However, the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act is likely to show an increase in preventions and a decrease in those who are made statutory homeless.

## 6. Conclusions

### Overview

- The rate of statutory applications and acceptances has increased in the last two years. Those being accepted as statutory homeless has increased significantly between 2015/16 and 2016/17 from 1.5 per 1,000 households to 2.5 per 1,000 households to bring them into line with England's rate which was 2.5 over both years. Local figures for 2017/18 show that the increase has slowed with rates plateauing at this higher level.
- Rates for people who are sleeping rough have decreased to 0.3 per 1,000 household in 2017 since an eight year high in 2015, but overall trends are increasing. Rates in Southampton have been consistently above the rates for England since 2011; the 2017 rate for England is 0.2 per 1,000 households.

### Who is accessing services?

- Southampton City Council has one of the highest rates of homeless young people aged 16-24 amongst comparator areas, with a high increase in rates between 2015/16 and 2016/17 from 0.6 per 1,000 population (or 62 households) to 0.8 per 1,000 population (or 84 households). Anecdotal evidence suggests that the benefit cap means that parents can no longer afford to have their children living at home.
- A survey of people who are begging or sleeping rough in Southampton shows dependence on or use of drugs and/or alcohol was a main barrier for individuals not accessing accommodation with financial concerns also being cited as a reason.

### Causes of homelessness

- The most common reasons for homeless applications in Southampton are the end of assured shorthold tenancy (AST – rising from 43 acceptances in 2015/16 to 106 in 2016/17), relationship breakdown or friends or family no longer able to accommodate. There is anecdotal evidence suggesting that landlords are not willing to let to people on universal credit and changes in tax mean that the amount of Income tax relief landlords can get on residential property finance costs will be restricted to the basic rate of tax, all of which result in fewer properties being available.
- Structural causes of homelessness are social and economic in nature, and are often outside the control of the individual or family concerned.
- Nationally poverty is one of the main reasons for homelessness; Southampton has a high proportion of children living in poverty compared to the England average and the city contains some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. The median gross weekly full-time pay in Southampton (£521 for full time employees) and the gross disposable household income (£14,797) are both lower than the England average (£556 and £19,878 respectively).



- Figures show that housing in Southampton is less affordable than England and is amongst the least affordable amongst its comparator areas.
- Due to the freezing of Local Housing Allowance (LHA), the cost does not cover the cost of rent in Southampton. For example LHA for a one bedroom property is £506 but the average rental amongst the lower priced properties is £550.
- The unemployment rate in Southampton has fallen in recent years from 7.9% in 2014 to 5.0% in 2017; a fall of 2.9% points over three years. Although unemployment has fallen, the jobs people are in are not necessarily full time stable employment as after the recession there was a move towards part-time work.
- Personal causes of homelessness include problems with drugs and/or alcohol. In Southampton hospital admissions for both alcohol and poisoning by illicit drugs are higher than the rate for England and many comparator areas. Therefore, more people may be at a higher risk of becoming homeless due to drugs or alcohol.
- Data from children's social care services shows that Southampton has one of the highest proportions of children's assessments which include alcohol misuse (22.5%) and drugs misuse (26.4%) as a factor. Evidence suggests that having parents with drug or alcohol problems can be a contributory factor to homelessness in later life.
- In Southampton the rate of looked after children is significantly higher than the rate for England, although 2017 saw a slight decline in the rate. Amongst comparator areas Southampton has the second highest rate meaning that it possibly has more children with a future risk of homelessness than comparator areas
- National data shows that a mental health difficulty is reported by 92% of people who are sleeping rough, with just under half (45%) reporting a diagnosed mental health condition.
- Poor educational attainment and getting involved in crime at an early age are also risk factors for future homelessness. Educational attainment is below average in Southampton, whilst first-time entrants (FTEs) to the youth justice system in Southampton have fallen for the fourth year running, although the rate of decrease is slowing.
- Preventions have seen an increase after two years of decreases, increasing by 12% between 2016/17 to 2017/18 but are not as high as they were in 2015/16. Preventions are likely to increase now the Homelessness Reduction Act has been introduced.

Overall the reasons behind the rise in those who are statutory homeless and the rise in those who are rough sleeping are complex. There have been major changes to the benefit system over recent years which, although have been nationwide, seem to have particularly impacted Southampton. This may be because there are more people living in Southampton with low incomes or low levels of disposable income which means benefit changes along with the lack of affordable accommodation, will impact the city's population more than other populations.

Rising homelessness among young people is a particular concern with a lack of affordable housing options being available and a reduction in the number who were returned home. The stakeholders' survey highlights similar issues with respondents raising the need to reduce the number of people sleeping rough, increase the number of properties available and provide better support to vulnerable people.





If the issues discussed above are not addressed then it is likely that homelessness in Southampton will rise, however the new Homelessness Reduction Act may reduce numbers of people who are homeless and increase preventions.

## 7. Appendices

### 7.1 Appendix A: Current Provision

The below is a 'menu' of support offered by service providers and organisation across the city, working collaboratively to support Young People, Families and Single Adults who are homeless. These services offer a range of different forms of intervention, including assistance with accommodation, drug and alcohol misuse, relationship mediation, or simply help with finances and benefits. Homelessness prevention is about making sure that we support and enable people to reduce their risk of becoming homelessness, and intervene as early as possible to limit the impact of homelessness, help people move on from homelessness, and avoid becoming homeless again in the future.

#### 7.1.1 Young People

##### *Housing related support services for vulnerable young people and young parents*

Southampton City Council is committed to the provision of high quality housing related support to vulnerable young people at risk of homelessness. Housing is a foundation for stability in relation to health, economic wellbeing, and safety from abuse and/or exploitation. The following outcomes have been identified as meeting key city targets:

- Ensure the young person is properly assessed and that their health and wellbeing needs are identified;
- Liaise with a range of services who ensure they support a young person to develop healthy lifestyles;
- Ensure that maximum opportunities are realised for each young person;
- Ensure opportunities are available for young people to volunteer in a range of positions such as administration, peer mentors and support champions/buddies;
- Help the young person identify and build on existing positive social networks, relationships and behaviours, whilst avoiding negative networks;
- Support the young person to move on to a settled home, as outlined in their support plan;
- Support the young person appropriately so they are less likely to leave in an unplanned way or through eviction; and
- Work in line with the Pre-eviction Protocol, notifying the council's Outreach Team prior to eviction.

### *The Homelessness Unit*

The Homelessness Unit offer an assessment of entitlement to housing for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and this is achieved through the following:

- Southampton City Council undertake a needs assessment with any referred young person aged under 18 years;
- Mediation takes place to ensure a safe return home and caution is given to any safeguarding issues. This is then followed up by (with the consent of all parties) a three way conciliation meeting;
- If mediation is unsuccessful the young person is referred to the Homelessness Team for a statutory homelessness assessment;
- Priority is given to 16 and 17 year olds, as part of the 2002 homelessness legislation<sup>38</sup>, and the usual eligibility checks are made, including reasons for homelessness;
- A Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) referral is always completed by homelessness officers to enable the Safeguarding Hub to check for additional needs and make an assessment around Children in Need (CIN) (if the child is aged 16/17 years old at the point of homelessness);
- The case is then progressed into the Multi-Agency weekly Housing Panel for any homeless young person aged 16-21 years;
- Agencies are able to refer any young person into the panel for consideration, including Children's Services, No Limits, Probation and YOS;
- Each case is assigned to a provider who will carry out an in-depth assessment of need and accommodation support requirements and full risk assessments;
- Each case is assigned to a provider who will carry out an in-depth assessment of need and accommodation support requirements and full risk assessments. The YP will be then housed within the YP supported accommodation provision;
- Accommodation providers are contracted who provide support and signposting to services, offering assistance around employment, training, education, dealing with welfare benefits, managing money and dealing with debt. Furthermore, providers are asked to continue with mediation with family reconciliation, where safe to do so; and
- Providers are also tasked with helping the young people to sustain accommodation, be good neighbours, responsible tenants and attain independence skills to live away from a home.

### *Care Leavers / Pathways*

Southampton City Council are committed to providing care leavers the necessary support to successfully transition into adulthood. The level of support a care leaver receives will depend on their circumstances (for example, if they are in education or employment) and how long they have been in care.

### *YMCA Supported Housing Provision*

YMCA Southampton provides safe, secure and comfortable supported housing for 16-21 year olds across a number of settings in the city. They also help residents plan the next steps in their life and to help facilitate any skills, qualifications or funds that may be required to aid progression.

### *Southampton Young People and Parents service*

Two Saints in Southampton offer accommodation and support for 16 – 21 year olds, including four properties dedicated to new parents.

#### *7.1.2 Single Adults*

##### *Street Homeless Prevention Team*

Southampton's Housing and Homelessness Prevention Service act as a gateway for housing related support services, to enable the prioritisation of rough sleepers into accommodation. Their role in the city is to:

- Engage with people who are sleeping rough in streets and car parks within the city centre;
- Offer advice and support to people willing to engage with services at the Day Centre;
- Help with health access, benefits and housing;
- Organise access to the Severe Weather Emergency Provision during cold weather;
- Where illegal encampments are found, report this to the Antisocial Behaviour Team who will clear tents from the site; and
- Provide intensive support to rough sleepers and other vulnerable clients who are accommodated but are in danger of losing this.

##### *Day Centre Support Services*

Where an individual is identified as sleeping rough, they are referred to the Day Centre run by Two Saints, an organisation who support the homeless and/or people who are vulnerable or in need of support. The Day Centre service will provide:

- ☑A triage and assessment to ensure that people who are rough sleeping receive the right housing and support programme, as well as warm meals, showers and access to laundry services and clothing;
- ☑Homeless prevention support and assistance for people with mental health or substance misuse is referred to the Vulnerable Adults Support Team (VAST);
- ☑A storage centre for any belongings which are found on council premises and deemed abandoned;

- A Homelessness Healthcare Team, which includes two psychiatric nurses for those requiring mental health services;
- Support with benefits, sanctions and applications for Universal Credit; and
- Education and employment opportunities.

#### *Vulnerable Adult Support Team*

The Vulnerable Adult Support Team (VAST) is a service commissioned by Southampton City Council through the Integrated Commissioning Unit and located within the Day Centre. The VAST team identify people who need more intensive support and has been able to offer:

- Risk management for alcohol and/ or drug misuse, and domestic abuse (as well as a wide range of other adult vulnerabilities);
- Liaison with care coordinators, information giving and referrals to community services; and
- Safeguarding referrals, including raising concerns about the impact on children of parental psychosocial issues.

#### *Pathways for Housing*

Patrick House, which supply short-term accommodation for people who are single and homeless, offers an assessment for people who are homeless to determine whether they require 'intensive', or general 'life skills' based support. For intensive support, there is:

- Accommodation provided by The Society of St James;
- The Booth Centre, run by the Salvation Army provides accommodation and life skills; and
- Jordan House, which offers a 'Life Skills Plus' service, where people who are homeless are responsible for looking after themselves, while maintaining links with the council's support services and emergency 24/7 support staff.

#### *Substance Misuse Team*

Substance Misuse Services offer treatment and support to anyone concerned by their, or someone else's, use of drugs and / or alcohol. This provision further offers;

- Advice, support and treatment which are accessed via self-referrals and referrals from GPs and other agencies;
- Work with the Homelessness Outreach Team, accepting referrals and offering support and treatment; and
- The Needle Exchange Program.

### *Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP)*

When the temperature is expected to drop below freezing point, for more than three days, the council ensures that there are additional beds available for people sleeping rough to access at short notice. In November 2017, this provision opened and didn't close until March 2018, regardless of the weather conditions, to allow more people who are street homeless a place to stay overnight.

### *Street Wardens*

In 2017 Southampton City Council employed two Street Wardens whose job it is to walk up and down the city centre and Above Bar Street to reassure and assist the public. The Street Wardens will approach anyone they have identified as sleeping rough and signpost them to the Street Homeless Prevention Team or Day centre. The street wardens also have a role in ensuring that rough sleepers and street beggars do not leave belongings unattended by arranging for storage and collection.

### *7.1.3 Families*

#### *Family engagement*

Southampton City Council have three Family Engagement Workers who work with families who could face homelessness due to their chaotic lifestyles. This work is offered bearing the Troubled Families/ Family Matters agenda in mind, an approach which identifies families with multiple and complex needs who require support to prevent these issues escalating. They offer:

- Staff who work with the whole family to avert any possible threat of homelessness becoming real;
- Support with rent arrears, those displaying antisocial behaviour, benefit cap (see section 2.1 for further information), support for children with high non-school attendance and financial hardship;
- Help to keep benefit claims in place, with an aim to get families back into employment;
- Help to support Asylum seekers who have newly issued refugee status and aide resettlement, budgeting support and general family support; and
- Assist those families who are deemed intentionally homeless to source other alternative housing solutions and avoid further threat of homelessness.

#### *Home Seekers letting service*

Southampton City Council also have an accommodation service within the Homelessness Unit helping to source good quality private rented accommodation and temporary accommodation, citywide for those families who have been accepted as statutory homeless. In 2015, Southampton's Homelessness Unit had 136 units of temporary accommodation for Homeless Families, which has now increased to 148 in 2018. Each unit is self-contained and the family in that accommodation will receive support and

help with managing their temporary tenancy throughout their stay. After 6-9 months they will be moved on to longer term settled housing, with the skills to manage their own tenancy with no significant issues and hopefully no further risk of homelessness. Most families will move on to permanent accommodation via the Housing List.

#### *Homeless Mediation and Outreach team*

Southampton City Council has a team of outreach workers who specialise in helping families threatened with homelessness. This team works with families and landlords to prevent evictions by the use of mediation, particularly where there are rent arrear problems, often caused by benefit shocks. The team works with families subject to the benefit cap.

#### *Homelessness Advice Team*

This team is responsible for taking statutory homelessness applications under the Housing Reduction Act 2017, Homelessness Act 2002 and Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 including emergency homelessness applications from households facing homelessness immediately from domestic violence, fire, flood etc.

#### *Health Care for Homeless Team*

This is a dedicated team of health visitors who assist families who are homeless and unable to access a GP. They visit all families placed in bed and breakfast and other emergency accommodation who have been placed by Southampton City Council.

#### *Voluntary Sector Providers*

There are many voluntary charities across the city that provide services which relieve the effects of hardship, disadvantage and poverty for individuals and families living in Southampton. Scratch is one of those charities who provide good quality furniture and household items through their Dorcas Project, and toys and gifts to less privileged families through their Christmas Complete programme.

## 7.2 Appendix B: Stakeholder Survey

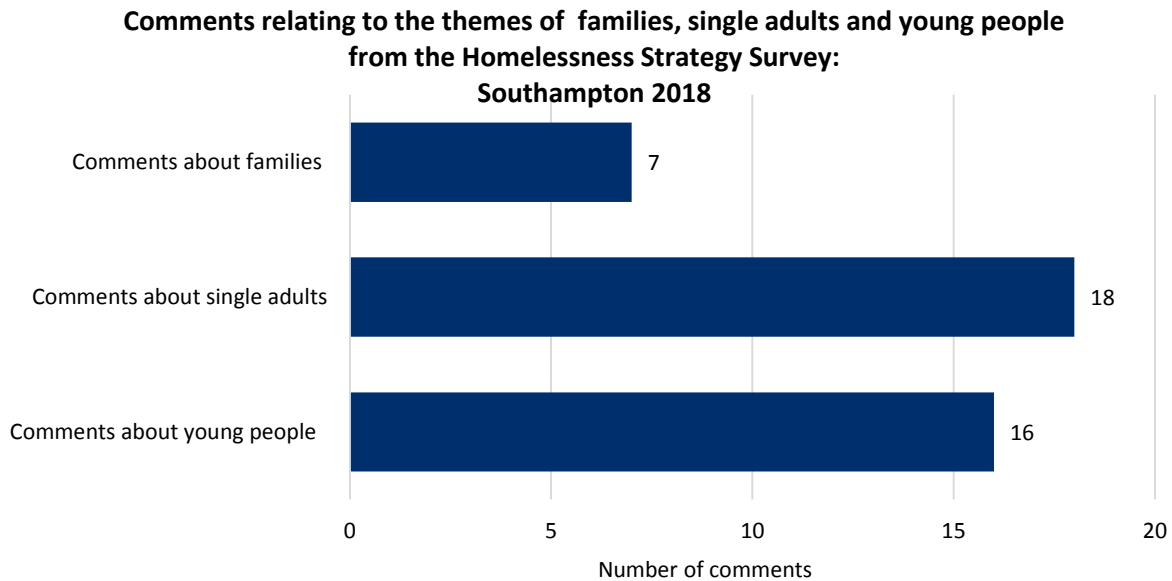
The aims of the survey were:

- To gather stakeholder feedback on the previous strategy and whether it has been achieved
- To inform the development of a new updated Homelessness Prevention Strategy
- To identify challenges and issues which the updated strategy should focus on

### Survey respondents

The survey asked respondents to advise which groups they work with and have particular interest in. This helped Southampton to understand whether they were commenting on all types of homelessness, or interested in a specific group only. It is worth noting that some respondent's spoke of more than one group. The stakeholder survey showed that, of the 33 people who responded, 16 people spoke about current provisions for young people, 18 commented on single adults and 7 commented on homelessness in respect of families. This shows that there is an underrepresentation of organisations who could comment on current service provision for homeless families, suggesting that the survey could have reached a wider audience with regard to families to better understand what had been done against the 2013-2018 objectives.

Figure 7.2.1



Source: Southampton Homelessness Prevention Strategy Stakeholder Survey





*Impacts on homelessness*

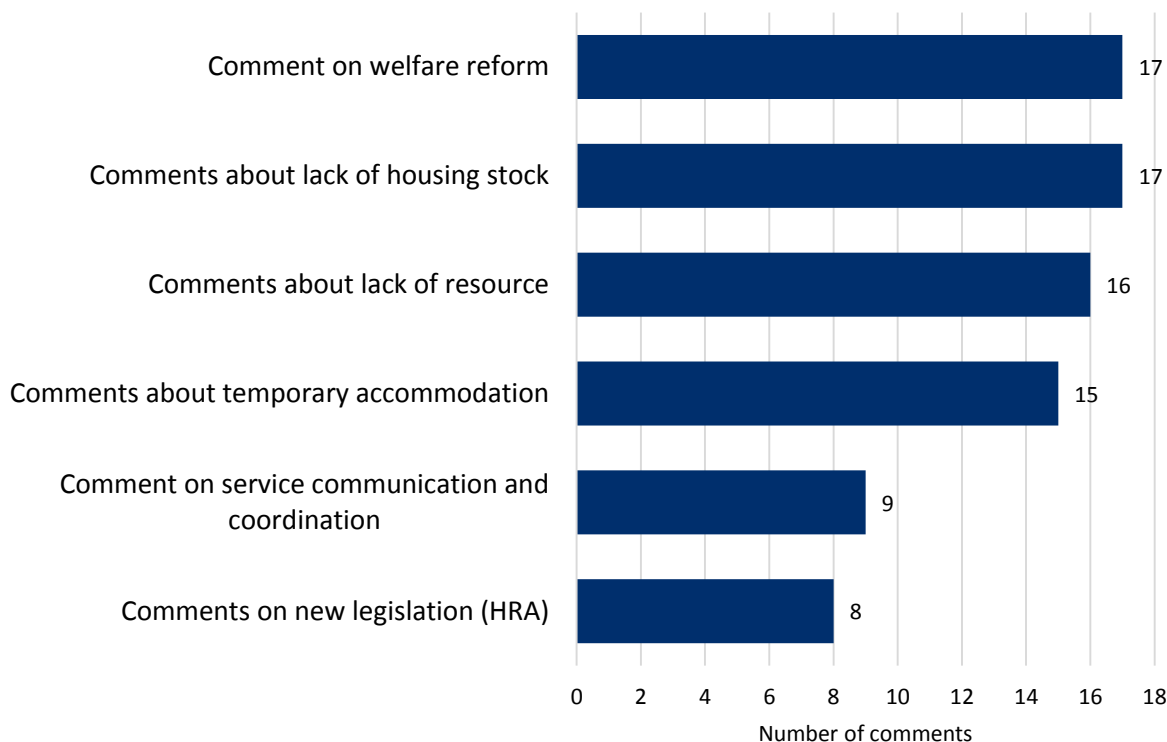
Southampton City Council asked respondents to identify what they felt were the main challenges to continuing to deliver their commitments. From this, Southampton were able to identify certain impacts which stakeholders felt have had, or will have on homelessness.

Figure 7.2.2 shows that lack of housing stock and the implementation of Universal Credit through the welfare reform were considered the largest factors contributing to homelessness as 17 respondents referred to both as a significant impact. This was followed closely by lack of resources and funding for services trying to tackle homelessness at 16 and an absence of adequate temporary accommodation for homeless (15 respondents).

The final point which was raised in feedback was issues around coordinating and communicating services. This can lead to a duplication of services or inefficiency around partners working over the city. The survey showed that 9 people felt that this was having an impact on homelessness, however the recent Beds, Begging and Business conference focused on how to align services better so that people can access help and support more easily.

Figure 7.2.2

**Comments from stakeholders on impacts associated with homelessness:  
Southampton 2018**



Source: Southampton Homelessness Prevention Strategy Stakeholder Survey

As a note, 8 stakeholders commented on the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and indicated how the impact of this new legislation will introduce the largest change to homelessness prevention regulations in the last few decades.

The implementation of the welfare reform continues to be one of the largest concerns for housing associations, social and private landlords, and particularly those who rely heavily on housing benefits. The majority of stakeholders noted the changes to housing benefit, rising costs of social housing and universal credit which is creating uncertainty as to whether the change can be implemented properly and will have a positive impact. Universal credit, which will combine different benefits into a single monthly payment, is being delayed, damaging confidence among landlords.

### *Strategy review*

The objectives within the last strategy were as follows:

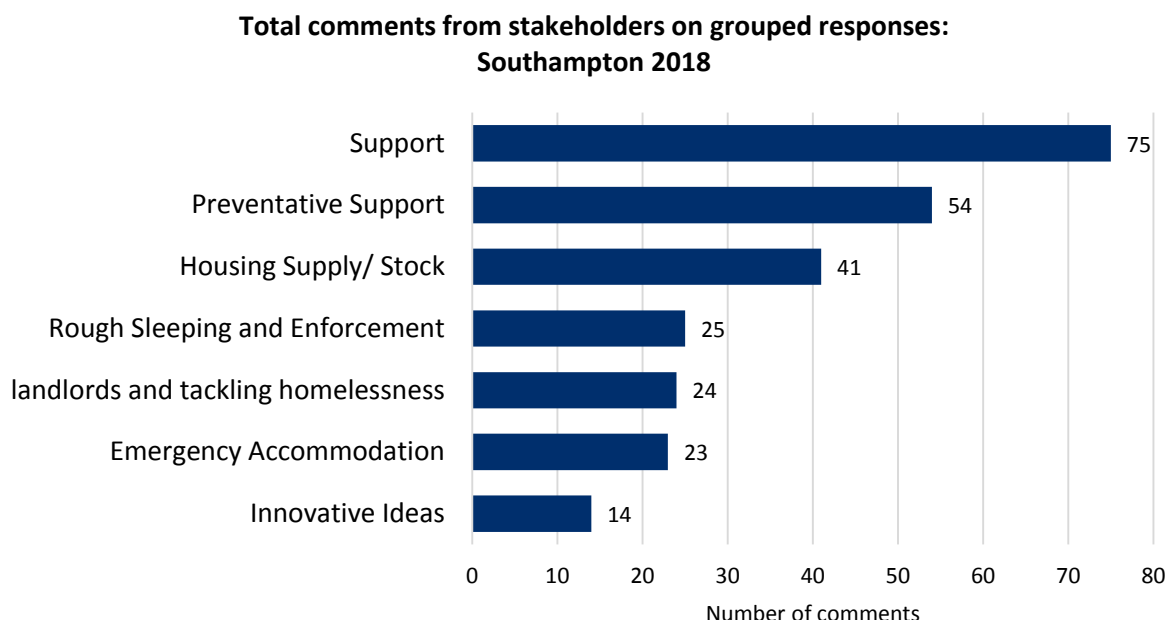
1. Prevent Homelessness
2. Maximise the number of available homes in the city to all sectors of the community including homeless people.
3. Provide good quality accommodation with support for short periods only, in order to enable successful move on and maintenance of a settled home.
4. Improve positive outcomes for homeless people or people at risk of homelessness.

Of the 33 people who responded to the survey, 67% (22) felt that the previous objectives were still right and 33% (11) of respondents felt that the objectives were still right but were not achieved. People generally felt that the objectives in the strategy reflect the preventative measures that Southampton should continue to take to ensure that people do not become homeless. However, others felt that policy change and budget cuts are forcing service providers to do more with less, leading to gaps in provision and achieving all of the objectives far more difficult. Furthermore, other impacts, such as lack of good quality housing stock and the increase in those sleeping rough across the city, was an indication that not all of these objectives had been achieved.

Stakeholders were then asked to give their views on the 2013–2018 objectives for the updated strategy, including what the biggest challenges and opportunities are, and how Southampton can best reduce and prevent homelessness in the city. The responses from the survey have been grouped thematically to underpin particular areas stakeholders thought the updated strategy should focus on. This includes: housing supply/ stock, emergency accommodation, landlords and homeless, preventative support, support, health and education, innovative and finally, people who are sleeping rough and enforcement.



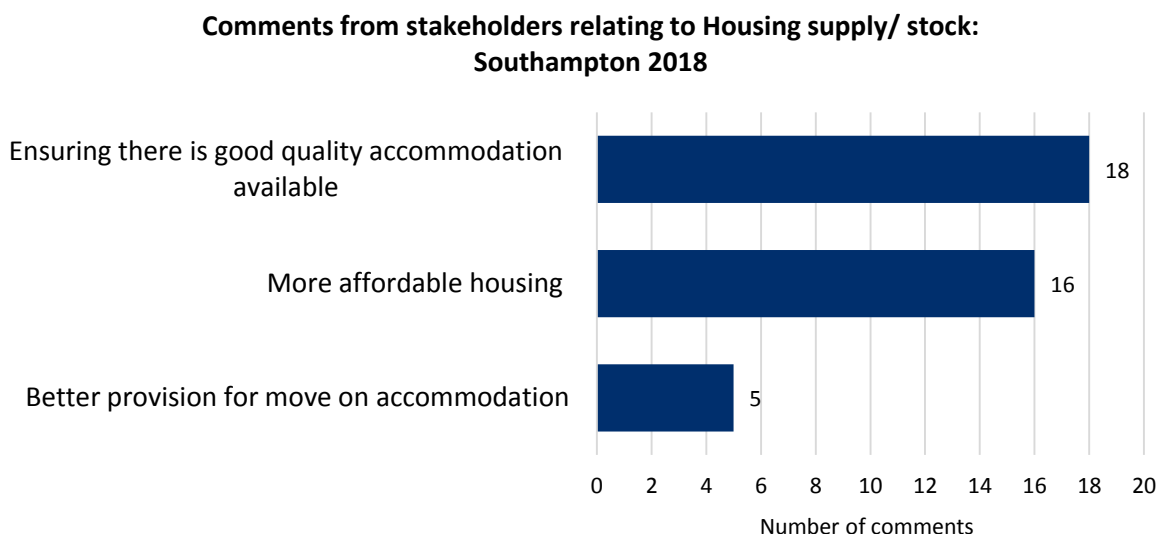
Figure 7.2.3



Source: Southampton Homelessness Prevention Strategy Stakeholder Survey

Figure 7.2.3 illustrates that, overall, people commented mainly on priorities in terms of support services for people who are homeless, as 75 comments were made over the survey by stakeholders. Furthermore, 54 comments were received relating to opportunities for preventative measures and 41 referred to housing supply and stock as an element of homelessness which should be reflected in the updated strategy. This suggests that the objectives of the updated strategy should remain similar to those in the 2013-18 strategy, in that support, including preventative support, housing supply and stock are all imperative to protect people from becoming homeless, or support those who are already living on the street.

Figure 7.2.4



Source: Southampton Homelessness Prevention Strategy Stakeholder Survey

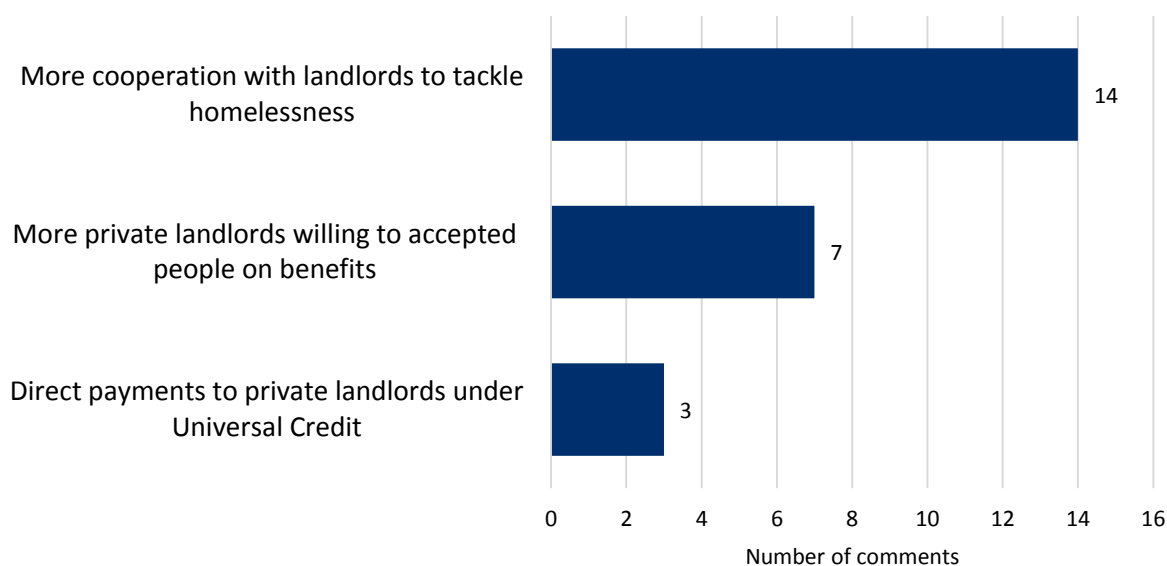


The highest number of comments received related to ensuring good quality of accommodation for people who are homeless. A total of 18 people commented on the need to ensure that there is good quality accommodation, mainly as this establishes a well settled home for homeless.

Below that, 16 people stated that there should be more affordable accommodation available within the city and 5 people felt that Southampton is lacking in the amount of move on accommodation for homeless to break the habit of short stay lodgings. Only 2 people stated that there should be an increase in leasing properties for temporary accommodation to act as move on accommodation instead of the direct access to hostels. There is a need to ensure there is an adequate amount of temporary accommodation, but more importantly, accommodation which is of good quality to promote a more settled environment for people who are homeless so they can improve their outcomes.

Figure 7.2.5

**Comments from stakeholders relating to private landlord’s involvement in tackle homelessness:  
Southampton 2018**



Source: Southampton Homelessness Prevention Strategy Stakeholder Survey

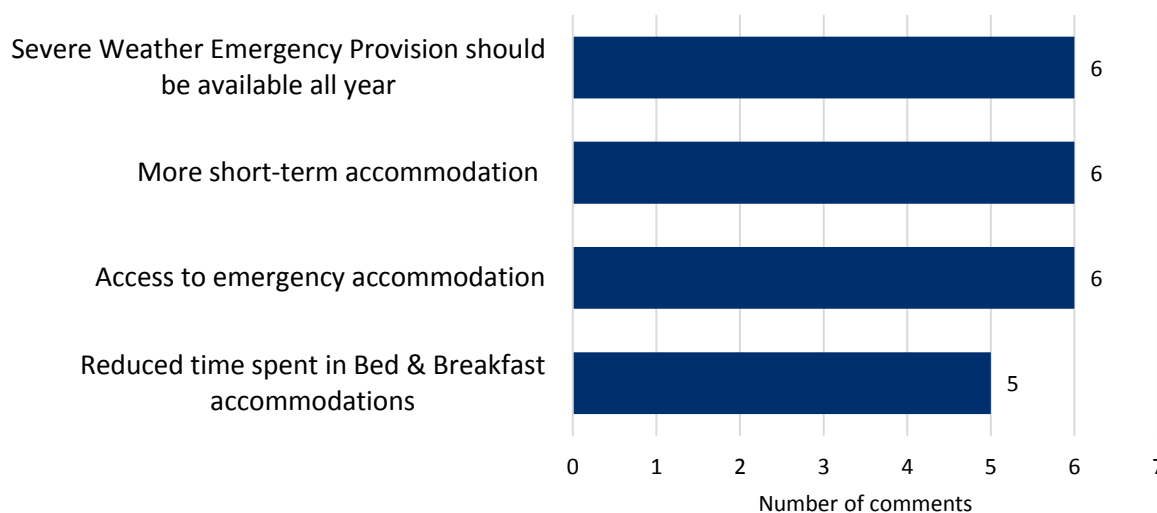
A high number of respondents highlighted the potential for more collaboration with private landlords across the city to tackle homelessness. Evidence from the survey found that stakeholders felt that private landlords should be doing more to protect people from becoming homeless by cooperating with organisations across the city. Respondents noted that finding private landlords who are willing to work with services is becoming more challenging, following the welfare reform, as Landlords are becoming increasingly particular about the type of tenant that want.



The survey shows that 14 people believe there should be more cooperation with landlord's to prevent homelessness. A total of 7 respondents have suggested that this could be achieved by more private landlords willing to accept people who receive benefits and 3 people stated direct payments to private landlords for people receiving Universal Credit should be implemented. More cooperation with private landlords should be explored to deal with increasing homelessness and accommodation shortages. Private landlords have access to wide levels of accommodation, but are deterred from taking on homeless or people in receipt of benefits due to the potential business risk. Housing associations are intensifying scrutiny of new tenant's finances and some of the poorest applicants are struggling to balance their finances now that direct payments have been scrapped.

Figure 7.2.6

**Comments from stakeholders relating to emergency accommodation for homeless: Southampton 2018**



Source: Southampton Homelessness Prevention Strategy Stakeholder Survey

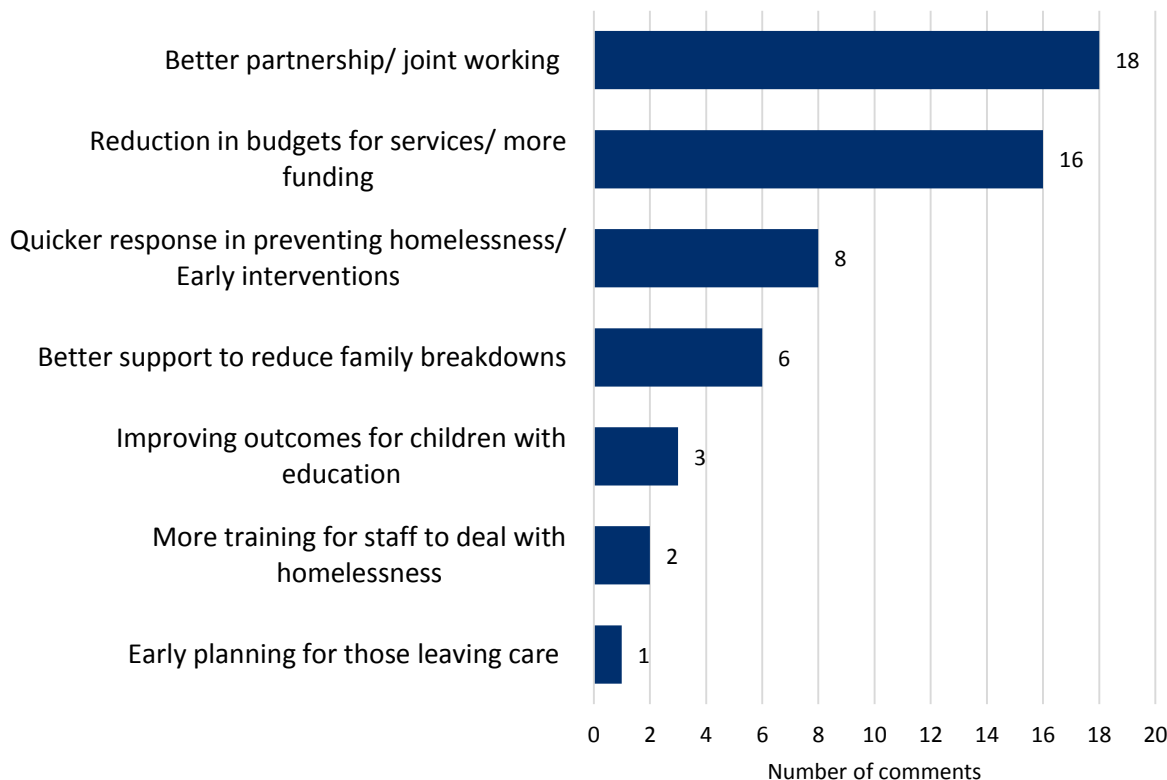
Figure 7.2.6 shows that stakeholders believe the most important elements of temporary accommodation is the amount of available short-term accommodation, access to emergency accommodation and the availability of Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) beds. Results from the survey illustrate that SWEP beds, short-term accommodation and access to emergency accommodation are considered the most important tools required to reduce the level of homelessness in Southampton.

A further 5 people indicated that reducing the time spent in Bed & Breakfast accommodation was equally important, particularly with families and single adults, unless absolutely necessary. The provision of Bed & Breakfast accommodation as emergency accommodation should be used as an absolute last resort.



Figure 7.2.7

**Comments from stakeholders relating to preventative support for homeless:  
Southampton 2018**



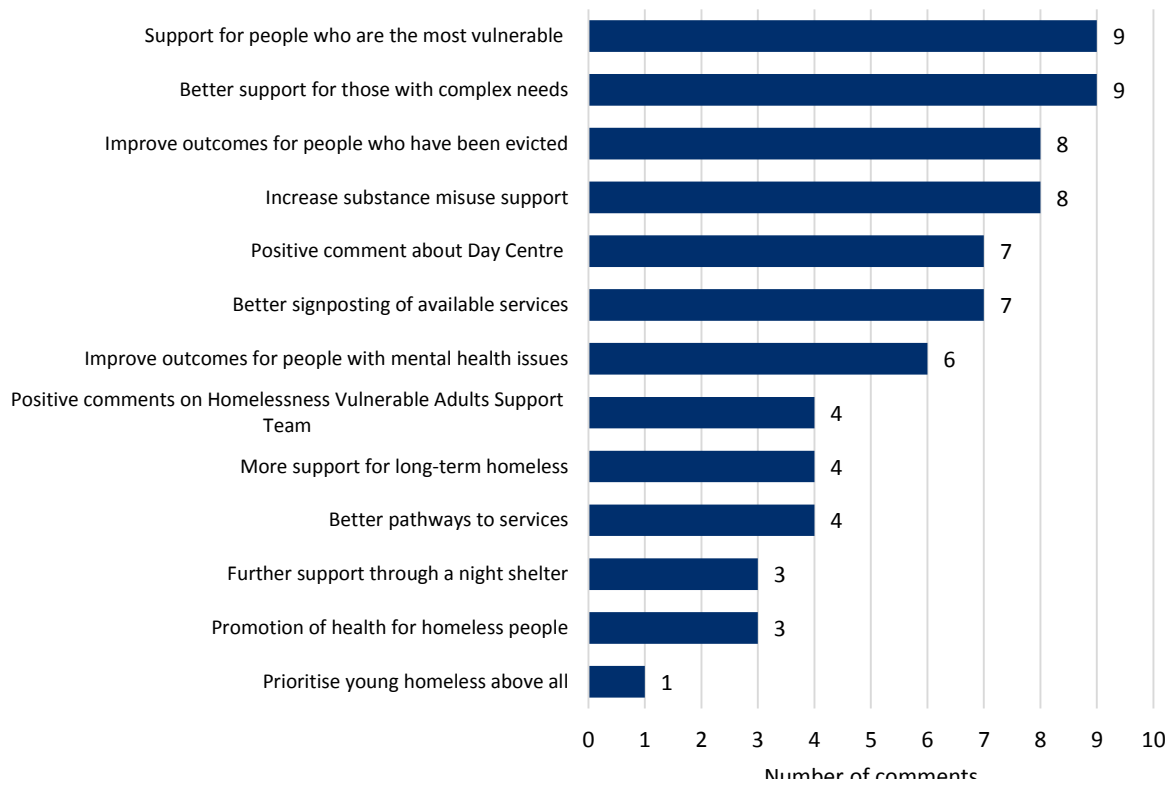
Source: Southampton Homelessness Prevention Strategy Stakeholder Survey

Figure 7.2.7 refers to what stakeholders thought the priorities are to support people who are at risk of becoming homeless, in an effort to stop this before it happens. Improved partnership working was one of the biggest opportunities to do more to achieve the commitments set in the strategy and 18 people who completed the survey agreed with this.

In addition, stakeholders identified that education for young people with regard to homelessness could be improved as an early preventative protocol to ensure they are less likely to wind up homeless themselves, and areas staff could undertake further training so they are more equipped to deal with those who are suffering from homelessness. There is a need for more support for vulnerable adults, especially those with complex needs and should be a priority for the new strategy based on the evidence of the survey, to ensure strong pathways of support are available.

Figure 7.2.8

**Comments from stakeholders relating to support services for homeless:  
Southampton 2018**



Source: Southampton Homelessness Prevention Strategy Stakeholder Survey

Support for those who are already homeless is just as crucial to ensure that homelessness prevention is achieved citywide. Evidence from the survey demonstrates that there is plenty of suggestions from stakeholders for how Southampton can support individuals who are already homeless, along with the continuation of services already in place.

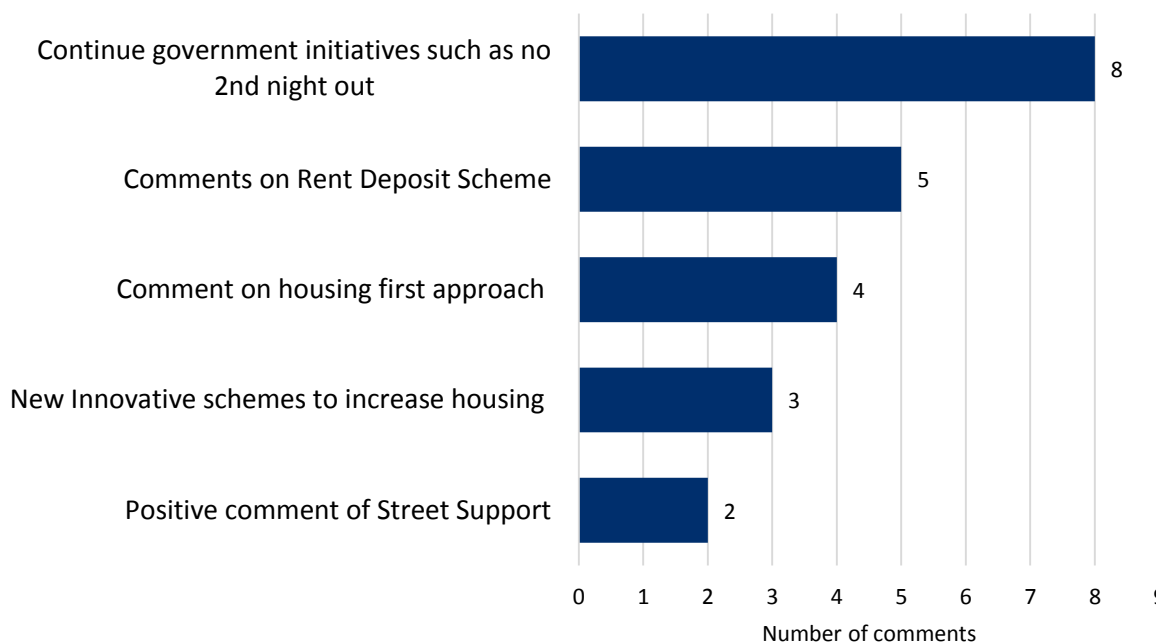
Figure 7.2.8 depicts the most important outcome was better support for those with complex needs, and for those who are the most vulnerable (9 people proposed this for both outcomes). Just below that, 8 stakeholders who completed the survey believed that there should be better outcomes for people who have been evicted. Within Southampton, the largest cause of homelessness is caused by the end of an assured shorthold tenancy, and, as such, outcomes for those who have lost their tenancy through an eviction has been regarded as a high priority for the new strategy.

Furthermore, 9 people felt that there should be an increase in substance misuse support for people who are homeless due to the associated risks of being vulnerable and an increase likelihood of using substances. Lastly, there should be more provision of healthcare, and health promotion to people who are homeless, signposted to colleagues who can address particular needs, and collaborate with partner agencies to facilitate improved health outcomes.



Figure 7.2.9

**Comments from stakeholders relating to innovative ideas to tackle homelessness:  
Southampton 2018**



Source: Southampton Homelessness Prevention Strategy Stakeholder Survey

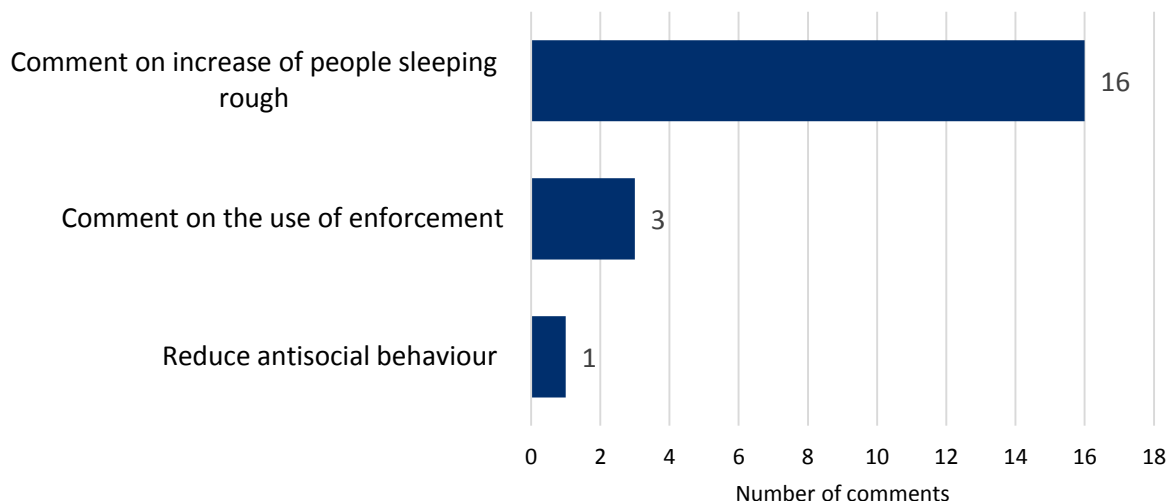
Stakeholders also looked at specific campaigns/programmes as well as any new and innovative ideas and proposed how the city continue to explore this in their feedback. Overall, 8 stakeholders supported government initiatives designed to address wider homelessness, such as the initiative No Second Night Out (see section 1 for further information).

A total of 5 respondents praised the deposit scheme (see section 1 for further information), however, concerns were raised suggesting this should be eased and encourage more private landlords to accept tenants receiving benefits.



Figure 7.2.10

**Comments from stakeholder in relation to the amount of people sleeping rough and enforcement:  
Southampton 2018**



Source: Southampton Homelessness Prevention Strategy Stakeholder Survey

Figure 7.2.10 illustrates comments from the survey in relation to people sleeping rough and the use of enforcement across the city. A total of 16 respondents stated that people who are sleeping rough was an increasing issue in Southampton and more should be done to reduce this. Furthermore, stakeholders implied that more should be done to communicate the successes of homeless teams to the public to encourage cooperation between organisations and the community. This would help reassure the public that teams are doing everything to support the most vulnerable people in our society, as well as, educate the community on what they can do to help.

Although the Homelessness Prevention Strategy should focus on prevention as a key objective, enforcement is almost always inevitable and 3 respondents noted this from the survey. Where support has been offered and continually rejected, and evidence of antisocial behaviour has been demonstrated, these situations are dealt with in line with the law, and enforcement action taken. Addressing people who are sleeping rough should be a high priority for the new strategy to curve the rise of street homeless across the city, through the implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act, which will increase the prevention role played by councils. The new Homelessness Prevention Strategy should prioritise people who are sleeping rough more heavily against future objectives to try and avert the growing number of street homelessness.

### 7.3 Appendix C: Definitions

#### Homeless:

The statutory definition of being homeless is set out in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996<sup>38</sup> which states:

1. A person is homeless if they have no accommodation available for their occupation, in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, which they;
  - Are entitled to occupy by virtue of an interest in it or by virtue of an order of a court,
  - Has an express or implied licence to occupy, or
  - Occupies as a residence by virtue of any enactment or rule of law giving them the right to remain in occupation or restricting the right of another person to recover possession.
  
2. A person is also homeless if they have accommodation but;
  - They cannot secure entry to it, or
  - It consists of a moveable structure, vehicle or vessel designed or adapted for human habitation and there is no place where he is entitled or permitted both to place it and to reside in it.
  
3. A person shall not be treated as having accommodation unless it is accommodation which it would be reasonable for them to continue to occupy.

#### Homelessness prevention:

Providing people with the ways and means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness<sup>39</sup>.

#### Homelessness relief:

Where an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness but helps someone to secure accommodation, even though the authority is under no statutory obligation to do so<sup>40</sup>.

#### Household:

One person or a group of people who have the accommodation as their only or main residence AND (for a group)

- Either share at least one meal a day, or
- share the living accommodation, that is, a living room or sitting room.

The occupant(s) of a bedsit who do not share a sitting or living room with anyone else comprise a single household.

<sup>38</sup> Housing Act 1996, Part VII. [Online]. Available from: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/52/part/VII> [Accessed 11 May 2018].

<sup>39</sup> GOV.UK (2018) *Homelessness data: notes and definitions*, [Online] Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions#homelessness-prevention-and-relief> [Accessed 14 March 2018].

<sup>40</sup> Ibid

**People who are rough sleeping:**

People who are rough sleeping are defined for the purposes of rough sleeping counts and estimates as:

- People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments)
- People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or 'bashes').

The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters or travellers<sup>41</sup>.

**Statutory Homeless<sup>42</sup>:**

Each local housing authority is required to consider housing needs within its area, including the needs of homeless households, to whom local authorities have a statutory duty to provide assistance.

The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977, Housing Act 1996, and the Homelessness Act 2002, placed statutory duties on local housing authorities to ensure that advice and assistance to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness is available free of charge. All households that apply for assistance under the Housing and Homelessness Acts are referred to as 'decisions'. However, these do not include households found to be ineligible for assistance (some persons from abroad are ineligible for assistance).

A 'main homelessness duty' is owed where the authority is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a specified priority need group. Such statutorily homeless households are referred to as 'acceptances'.

The 'priority need groups' include households with dependent children or a pregnant woman and people who are vulnerable in some way e.g. because of mental illness or physical disability. In 2002 an Order made under the 1996 Act extended the priority need categories to include applicants:

- aged 16 or 17
- aged 18 to 20 who were previously in care
- vulnerable as a result of time spent in care, in custody, or in HM Forces
- vulnerable as a result of having to flee their home because of violence or the threat of violence

Where a main duty is owed, the authority must ensure that suitable accommodation is available for the applicant and his or her household. The duty continues until a settled housing solution becomes

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<sup>41</sup> GOV.UK (2013) *Homelessness data: notes and definitions*, [Online] Available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions#homelessness-prevention-and-relief>  
[Accessed 27 February 2018].

<sup>42</sup> Ibid



available for them, or some other circumstance brings the duty to an end. Where households are found to be intentionally homeless, or not in priority need, the authority must make an assessment of their housing needs and provide advice and assistance to help them find accommodation for themselves.

**Sofa surfing<sup>43</sup>:**

The practice of staying temporarily with various friends and relatives while attempting to find permanent accommodation.

**No Second Night Out:**

A scheme which focuses on helping those who find themselves street homeless for the first time, and to ensure a rapid response to those new people who are sleeping rough.

**Deposit Scheme:**

A scheme which aims to help people on low income or in receipt of welfare benefits who need funding to gain access to the privately rented accommodation in the City of Southampton.

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<sup>43</sup> Collins English Dictionary (2018), *Definition of 'sofa surfing'* [Online] Available from: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/sofa-surfing> [Accessed 19 June 2018].