

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Joint Homelessness Strategy
Date: 10 January 2013
Author: Service Manager, Housing & Localities

Wards affected

Borough-wide.

Purpose of the Report

To recommend that Cabinet endorses the joint homelessness strategy for Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe and refers it to Council for approval and adoption.

Key decision

This is not a key decision. The final decision on whether or not to adopt the policy will rest with Council.

Background

- 1.1 All local housing authorities in England are required by the Homelessness Act 2002 to publish a homelessness strategy every five years. Gedling's last homelessness strategy was published in July 2008, meaning it is due for renewal in 2013. The proposed strategy takes into account the views of partners, the latest best practice from across the country, and the recommendations and expectations as set out in the national homelessness document *Making Every Contact Count*, published in August 2012.
- 1.2 For reasons discussed in the strategy itself (attached as a separate document), the Council has pursued a joint strategy with Broxtowe and Rushcliffe borough councils. This will complement a new South Notts Interagency Homelessness Forum, which will improve partnership working across the three councils' areas, and will be the body which monitors progress on the action plan resulting from the strategy.

- 1.3 Consultation on the strategy commenced with an event on 3 October 2012, which was attended by around 80 people, including customer-facing staff, representatives from statutory and voluntary sector partner agencies, parish councils and members of all three councils. This led to a strategy that proposed outcomes and areas for action (see appendix 1). In the following period of consultation, which ran from 13 November 2012 to 10 December 2012, consultees were asked whether they agreed with these outcomes and areas for action, and what specific and measurable actions they could take to put them into practice. Unfortunately, at this stage, insufficient proposals for specific actions have been received. Therefore, the next stage following adoption of the strategy will be to generate an action plan through the interagency forum. It is proposed that this is an action plan that can be completed within one year, given the requirement set out in *Making Every Contact Count* to review the strategy every year, and the likelihood of needing to react to changing circumstances as changes introduced in 2013, such as welfare reform and discharging homelessness duty to the private sector, take effect.
- 1.4 The draft Homelessness Strategy was sent to all members of the Policy Review Scrutiny Group, in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules for policies that have been developed in partnership.

Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed that Cabinet endorses the joint homelessness strategy, and refers it to Council for approval and adoption. This will ensure the Council meets its obligations under Sections 1 to 4 of the Homelessness Act 2002, and to promote and focus effective partnership working to prevent homelessness, provide help at the point of homelessness and support the move away from homelessness.
- 2.2 The proposed strategy, and the review of homelessness which it contains, satisfy the statutory obligations and are based on best practice and extensive research and consultation. Following adoption of the strategy, the Service Manager, Housing & Localities, the Housing Strategy & Development Officer and the Housing Needs Manager will work with partners in the South Notts Interagency Homelessness Forum to generate the first action plan to implement the strategy, to cover the 2013-4 year. Further action plans will be generated in future years to respond to changing circumstances.

Alternative options

- 3.1 To adopt a different strategy

The Council is required to publish a refreshed homelessness strategy that accords with sections 1 to 4 of the Homelessness Act 2002 by July 2013. However, the Council has wide discretion over the content of the strategy and the actions resulting from it, and is expected to tailor the actions to meet local requirements.

3.2 Not to adopt any strategy;

If Council is not satisfied that the proposed strategy is appropriate, it could decide not to adopt it, and request that modifications are made and a revised strategy is presented to Council before July 2013. However if the decision was taken not to adopt the attached strategy, then the Council would not be complying with the requirements of the Homeless Act 2002.

Resource Implications

- 4.1 Any expenditure as a result of implementing the strategy in 2013-14 can be met from existing resources. Should further resources be identified as required for future years, any development bids would be subject to the normal Budget processes.

Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – proposed outcomes and areas for action in the homelessness strategy.
5.2 Appendix 2 - Homelessness Review and Homelessness Strategy 2013

Background papers

6. Equality Impact Assessment

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

Cabinet endorses the Joint Homelessness Strategy for Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe and refers it to Council for approval and adoption.

Reason for recommendation

- 7.1 In order to meet the Council's statutory duties under the Homelessness Act 2002.
7.2 In order to contribute to the Council's objective to minimise the incidence of homelessness.
7.3 In order to promote effective working with statutory and voluntary sector partner agencies.

Appendix 1 – proposed outcomes and areas for action in homelessness strategy

Intended outcomes for this homelessness strategy

Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe borough councils are building on their historic co-operation in housing matters by working towards a joint homelessness strategy and an action plan to be delivered and managed by a joint inter-agency forum of partners involved in tackling and preventing homelessness. The strategy and action plan need to be based on a full review of homelessness in the area, which takes into account government guidance and extensive consultation with partners.

The councils propose to work towards the following outcomes through this strategy:

- No one should have to sleep rough in South Notts

- All local authorities will work with partners to reduce the number of homeless applications they need to consider year on year

- All councils will minimise the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation for homeless households, with the long term aim of ending it altogether.

- Knowing that there is insufficient social housing to meet demand, all potentially homeless clients will get the help they need to access private rented housing

- All young people in South Notts should learn about homelessness, realistic housing options, domestic abuse and healthy relationships in school

All client groups with special needs will have clear and up to date referral pathways so that it is clear which agency is responsible for providing services to them at what time

Areas for action

Preventing homelessness

- Develop clear pathways for the following key client groups, so that all partners know what is available and can find the help that their clients need
 - Young homeless people
 - Prison leavers
 - Care leavers
 - People with mental illness
 - Domestic violence survivors

- Make home visits and/or mediation a standard option that is presented where appropriate in parental eviction cases.

- Develop a range of ways to support both tenants and landlords when homeless households are housed in the private rented sector
- Ensure all potentially homeless clients have access to financial services suitable to their needs, to include a Credit Union rent account or basic bank account.
- Look at the capacity of debt advice services and see how they can be expanded if necessary (from Broxtowe 2008 action plan)
- Explore ways to help more people share homes, and support vulnerable people to do so.
- Continue the schools education programme for every secondary school and pupil referral unit in South Notts for lifetime of the strategy.
- Work with Registered Providers to achieve full sign-up to the pre-eviction protocol.
- Review the accessibility of the Choice Based Lettings system to increase participation.
- Improve the targeted spending of Discretionary Housing Payments (from Broxtowe 2008 action plan)
- Carry out a value for money review of the different homelessness prevention initiatives in use.
- Revisit [Homelessness Prevention: a guide to good practice](#) and assess whether everything recommended, or an alternative, is being provided if there is a need for it in South Notts.

Help at the point of homelessness

- Use the Homeless Link toolkit and information provided by the Street Outreach Team to check and improve the quality of rough sleeper estimates.
- Specifically state and quantify what quick access accommodation is needed to reduce/phase out the use of B&Bs for homeless households, and cost this provision so that action can be taken forward quickly when funding is available.
- Carry out a review of homeless people in South Notts against different diversity characteristics to identify any actions needed to tackle homelessness among a particular group.
- Review the need for an update to the 2004 BME housing needs study, given the disproportionate level of BME homelessness.
- Review Council temporary accommodation provision (from Broxtowe 2008 action plan)

Supporting the move away from homelessness

- Develop schemes to help young people to share housing and sustain their tenancy in shared accommodation.
- Hold housing options outreach sessions at the Friary to ensure rough sleepers get the advice they need and are connected to other services (from Rushcliffe 2008 action plan)
- Procure and monitor additional support services (follow-up to Gedling 2008 action plan)



Homelessness Review and Homelessness Strategy 2013

**Broxtowe Borough Council
Gedling Borough Council
Rushcliffe Borough Council**

**To be put into practice through the South Notts Interagency
Homelessness Forum**

Draft for adoption v 4.0
December 2012

Contents

Intended outcomes for this homelessness strategy	11
Why publish a homelessness strategy?	11
Why a joint homelessness strategy?	11
South Notts Inter-Agency Homelessness forum.....	12
National policy drivers	13
Local policy drivers and resources available	17
Relationship to other housing strategies	18
Review of homelessness.....	20
1. How many people are homeless?	20
1a. Homelessness applications and decisions	20
1b. Successful homelessness preventions	22
1c. People in housing need approaching other agencies	24
1d. Households living in temporary accommodation.....	25
1e. Rough sleeping.....	26
2. Who becomes homeless?	28
2a. Household type.....	28
2b. Age	29
2c. Ethnic background	31
2d. Disability	34
2e. Priority need.....	34
3. Why do people become homeless?	37
4. Where do people become homeless?	39
5. What changes are we likely to see in homelessness?	42
5a. Economic and financial factors	42
5b. Availability of social housing	47
5c. Availability of private rented housing.....	50
5d. Health factors.....	52
5e. Domestic abuse	52
6. Conclusions from desktop review of homelessness.....	54
7. Self-assessment of homelessness action plans	56
7a. Broxtowe Borough Council – 2008 Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.....	56
7b. Gedling Borough Council – 2008 Homelessness Strategy Action Plan	63
7c. Rushcliffe Borough Council – 2008 Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.....	67
8. Mapping current service provision.....	73
8a. Information and advice	73
8b. Preventing homelessness.....	74
8c. Accommodation providers	76
8d. Services for homeless people.....	79

9. Assessment of services.....	82
9a. Homelessness and health	82
9b. Youth homelessness	83
9c. Domestic abuse	84
9d. Accessing private rented housing	85
9e. Accessing social rented housing.....	86
9f. Pathways into training and work	88
9g. Support to prevent homelessness	88
9h. Financial and debt advice	90
9i. Clients leaving institutions.....	91
9j. Preparing for welfare reform	91
Developing the action plan	93
Areas for action	94
Appendix South Notts Interagency Homelessness Forum	96

Intended outcomes for this homelessness strategy

Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe borough councils are building on their historic co-operation in housing matters by working towards a joint homelessness strategy and an action plan to be delivered and managed by a joint inter-agency forum of partners involved in tackling and preventing homelessness. The strategy and action plan need to be based on a full review of homelessness in the area, which takes into account government guidance and extensive consultation with partners.

The councils propose to work towards the following outcomes through this strategy:

- No one should have to sleep rough in South Notts
- All local authorities will work with partners to reduce the number of homeless applications they need to consider year on year
- All councils will minimise the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation for homeless households, with the long term aim of ending it altogether.
- Knowing that there is insufficient social housing to meet demand, all potentially homeless clients will get the help they need to access private rented housing
- All young people in South Notts should learn about homelessness, realistic housing options, domestic abuse and healthy relationships in school
- All client groups with special needs will have clear and up to date referral pathways so that it is clear which agency is responsible for providing services to them at what time

Why publish a homelessness strategy?

There are both legal reasons and practical reasons for having a homelessness strategy. Legally, all local housing authorities are required to publish a homelessness strategy at least every five years, and to base it on a thorough review of homelessness in their area.¹

Practically, and just as importantly, a homelessness strategy is a roadmap for achieving the outcomes the local authorities want to see, which is generally to minimise homelessness and ensure people get the help they need when they need it. A strategy and its action plan can be a focus for multi-agency action, drawing together all the work being done by statutory and voluntary sector partners, and helping them to plan how to fill any gaps they have identified.

Why a joint homelessness strategy?

¹ Homelessness Act 2002, sections 1 to 4.

Although there are social and economic differences both within each borough and between them, Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe are similar in many ways, and form part of the same housing market (formally known as the Nottingham Core sub regional market). All include the relatively affluent suburban areas of the Greater Nottingham conurbation, a number of surrounding market towns and a varying degree of rural countryside. All have their own pockets of social and economic deprivation. The majority of each borough's population live close to Nottingham, which is the economic, cultural and service hub of the area, and the major public services provided there, such as further education and hospitals, affect people in all three boroughs.

The three borough councils have a long history of co-operation in many areas, including housing, which has saved money and led to better outcomes. They have shared officer posts, which facilitates sharing knowledge and learning; they share a Choice Based Lettings software system; and they have managed housing projects jointly, such as the development and commissioning of quick access accommodation for single homeless people at Elizabeth House. Nottinghamshire County Council regard the South Notts area as one for many functions, including the funding and monitoring of homelessness services, both accommodation-based, such as Elizabeth House and Stepping Stones, and floating support. Other non-statutory funded services, such as Cedar Housing, also operate on a South Notts basis, accepting referrals primarily from the three borough councils.

Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe borough councils each published their last homelessness strategy in 2008, meaning that all fall due for renewal in 2013. Given the history of co-operation, sharing services and the local context, all partners agreed that a joint homelessness strategy was the next development in minimising homelessness and securing value for public money.

South Notts Inter-Agency Homelessness forum

In July 2012, it was agreed to establish a single South Notts Inter-Agency Homelessness Forum to bring together statutory and voluntary agencies involved in preventing homelessness and providing services to homeless people (see appendix for membership list). This shared strategy and its action plan are far from being the only or main reason for the forum, but they are intended as a focal point to which all partners can contribute their actions and achievements and build a joined-up picture of the services available. The authorities have undertaken to report progress against the action plan to the forum on a regular basis, making it transparent and accountable, and avoiding the possibility that the action plan could be "left on the shelf".

A single forum means that partners only need to go to one place to share information, report problems or discuss ways of working together better, and the relationships built up through it will facilitate further partnership working outside the formal meetings. It is a single point of engagement with the local housing authorities, and with the upper-tier authority, Nottinghamshire County Council, which provides the majority of statutory funding for homelessness services.

There are also considerable efficiency savings to operating a single forum. Compared to the alternative of each borough running their own quarterly forum, each person attending the forum is saving, as a minimum, the preparation, travelling, attendance and follow-up administration from eight meetings per

year, which is approximately eight working days per year that can be spent providing services rather than attending meetings, or a 3.5% saving in productivity² for each person attending.

The forum and the action plan are flexible enough that there is no need to lose local focus. Actions that relate only to one particular location can be included in the action plan with the relevant partners responsible for completing them, and can be discussed at the forum, or a sub-group can be convened for that purpose and report back.

National policy drivers

[Homelessness Strategies: a good practice handbook](#)

Although rather old (it was published as a follow-up to the 2002 Homelessness Act which introduced the requirement for homelessness reviews and strategies) this handbook remains the relevant guidance that strategies should comply with. It emphasises the key stages of developing the strategy, being:

- Consultation;
- A needs assessment;
- An audit of services, including an assessment of resources;
- A programme for planning and implementing the strategy.

The strategy should focus on three areas:

- Preventing homelessness;
- Providing help at the point of homelessness;
- Facilitating the move away from homelessness.

It is also clear about the importance of joint working, the focus on preventative activities and the need to reduce the use of Bed & Breakfast Accommodation. This strategy has been prepared taking this guidance into account.

[Homelessness Code of Guidance](#)

The statutory Code of Guidance on homelessness includes a chapter on preparing homelessness reviews and strategies. This emphasises the breadth of involvement from partners and the extent of meaningful consultation required, and accords with our desire to produce a truly joined-up strategy that focuses the efforts and resources of all partners. The Code gives a number of useful examples of people that should be involved in consultation and sources of information that should be consulted, and these have been followed up in the preparation of the review.

[Making Every Contact Count](#)

Published in August 2012, Making Every Contact Count was produced by the cross-departmental Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness and presents a holistic approach to tackling the root

² Assuming 260 working days in the year, 8 Bank Holidays and the statutory minimum 20 days annual leave for full time employees.

causes of homelessness. It is based on two principles: prevention and early intervention, and creating a “second chance society”. In this way it is similar to the three-pronged approach set out in the previous guidance on homelessness strategies, but with the second aim of providing help at the point of homelessness now implicit within the “second chance society”.

Making Every Contact Count sets out five commitments that the Government has made to minimising homelessness, and the District Councils Network has published a briefing suggesting the policy tools that district councils can use to help implement these commitments.³ A selection of these that are relevant and can be implemented in South Notts include:

- Forge closer links with Health & Wellbeing Boards, based on the presence of statutory homelessness as an indicator in the Public Health Outcomes Framework;⁴
- Use Joint Strategic Needs Assessments to improve the evidence base on the health of homeless people and make it a shared priority;
- Highlight the links between preventing homelessness and preventing crime through new Police & Crime Panels;
- Implement guidance on helping offenders to access the private rented sector⁵;
- Map out youth accommodation pathways for young homeless people;
- Engage with the troubled families initiative to reduce homelessness as a result of family breakdown;
- Strong local services and partnerships to deliver skills training, apprenticeships and pre-employment support;
- Local partnership work with voluntary sector providers (i.e. Citizens’ Advice Bureau) to deliver debt advice and support.

Making Every Contact Count sets out how central Government is working across departmental barriers, and challenges local authorities to raise the bar in terms of integrated partnership working and embed a homelessness prevention service through all statutory and voluntary agencies. The challenge of this should not be underestimated, particularly where local government functions are divided in a two tier area, but it also sets out ten specific challenges, which are a useful self-assessment tool that can give guidance to future actions. These challenges “are not a central imposition, but the Government thinks that their adoption ‘could lead to all homelessness services meeting the standards of the best.’”⁶

	Challenge	Situation in South Notts
1	To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services	See Foreword to this strategy
2	To actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs	Co-ordinated through NCC Targeted Support, who are part of Interagency Forum
3	To offer a Housing Options prevention service to all clients including written advice	Online Housing Options wizard available and used in prevention

³ District Councils Network, [Homelessness Research & Policy Briefing](#), August 2012

⁴ http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_132358

⁵ Crisis, [Finding and sustaining a home in the private rented sector: the essentials](#), September 2012

⁶ See note 3.

		interviews – produces plan to print
4	To adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative	Adopted and in operation – outreach and assessment by Framework
5	To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support	Some exist, but not all consistent or up to date. This is an action for this strategy.
6	To develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both client and landlord	In development – this is an action for this strategy, building on experience from First Lets project
7	To actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme	All three authorities are doing this and have completed mortgage rescues
8	To have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs	Strategy in place – strong focus on prevention and annual review will take place. Progress on actions to be reported back to Interagency Forum.
9	To not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation	Only two 16/17 year olds placed in B&B across South Notts in 2012
10	To not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks	All authorities can commit to this, except for families with very exceptional circumstances where B&B is the most appropriate placement

Power to discharge homelessness duty to the private sector

One of the biggest changes to national homelessness policy is the new power for councils to discharge their homelessness duties by finding suitable private rented accommodation for the applicant. This was always an option, but it was only with the commencement of the relevant legislation in November 2012⁷ that the applicant could be required to accept the offer in the same way as offers of social housing.

This offers an important new option and changes the dynamics of homelessness applications, which will mean people are no longer guaranteed a social housing property if they are accepted as homeless and the council finds them a private rented property first. However, homeless households will still be prioritised for the social housing that is available and, as section 5c of the review considers, it will still be challenging to secure suitable private rented accommodation, particularly for larger families. Authorities are still required to secure accommodation within their own district so far as reasonably practical, or effectively as close as possible to the household's last settled address if this is not possible. They must take into account the household's work, education and caring responsibilities, as well as any health, care or support needs they have when assessing the suitability of a property.⁸

⁷ Localism Act 2011, sections 147 & 148, [commenced](#) 9 November 2012.

⁸ [Homelessness \(Suitability of Accommodation\) \(England\) Order 2012](#)

Nevertheless, the new power gives the councils greater flexibility to help homeless households to move more quickly, and in some cases will allow them to free up temporary accommodation for other households by preventing applicants from refusing suitable private sector homes, in the hope of holding out for their preferred option of social housing.

Local policy drivers and resources available

Housing is given a prominent role within Broxtowe Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2012 – 2016⁹, being the first of five priorities listed. Below this is a specific objective that "*at least 220 potentially homeless people every year will not become homeless because of successful preventive advice and action taken by the Council*". This challenges the Council to sustain its historically strong performance in preventing homelessness. The Broxtowe Housing Strategy 2010 – 2015¹⁰ is clearly related back to the completion of the Trailblazer Action Plan and the 2008 Homelessness Strategy Action Plan, and places particular emphasis on reducing homelessness as a result of domestic abuse. The Council employs five full time members of staff in its Housing Options Team (unlike at Gedling and Rushcliffe, a separate team manages the Housing Register).

One of Gedling Borough Council's priorities is Homes and, within this, the Council has a high level objective to minimise the incidence of homelessness.¹¹ Preventing homelessness is an integral and specific part of the Borough's Housing Strategy 2010 – 2014¹², and is thus an area where the Council devotes significant resources. 11 members of staff (8.25 full time equivalents) are employed in the Housing Needs Team.

Preventing homelessness is a major theme of the Rushcliffe Housing Strategy 2009 - 2016¹³, within which strategic action 3.1 is "*We will work to prevent homelessness – due to the primary causes of family breakdown, domestic violence, and private sector evictions. We will accomplish this through closer joint working initiatives, guaranteed home visits, and extension of our spend to save prevention initiative.*" 9 members of staff work in the Housing Options Team, (6.5 full time equivalents), which has an overall budget of £269,800.

All authorities have a duty to secure best value for public money, and dealing with homelessness when it occurs is costly, in terms of staff time, temporary accommodation, disruption to other services, and the long term impact on a household, which is then more likely to need to use other public services such as the health service and criminal justice system. A number of studies have been carried out to estimate the costs of homelessness, and these have produced a range of figures. However, a reasonable estimate is that the direct cost to the local authority of dealing with a homelessness application is £2,112,¹⁴ whereas the long-term cost of a family becoming homeless to the public purse as a whole is over £26,000.¹⁵

Even without any examination of the human cost, therefore, all the local authorities have a clear commitment for financial reasons to concentrate on preventing homelessness and tackling the causes, rather than the symptoms, so far as is possible.

⁹ [Broxtowe Corporate Plan 2012 - 2016](#)

¹⁰ [Broxtowe Housing Strategy 2010 - 2015](#)

¹¹ [Gedling Borough Council Plan 2012 - 2013](#)

¹² [Gedling Housing Strategy 2010 - 2014](#)

¹³ [Rushcliffe Housing Strategy 2009 - 2016](#)

¹⁴ Shelter/Aclaim Consulting, [Value for money in housing options and homelessness services](#), 2010

¹⁵ Business in the Community/New Economics Foundation, [Work It Out: barriers to employment for homeless people](#), 2006

Relationship to other housing strategies

When reviewing their homelessness strategies, local housing authorities are required to have regard to their allocations scheme and their tenancy strategies.

At present, the three councils share a common allocations policy, but new government guidance¹⁶ requires each authority to give greater consideration to the individual housing circumstances of their area, when deciding whether to use the new flexibilities introduced in relation to qualification and preference for housing. For this reason, each council will adopt its own allocations policy from April 2013 onwards. They will still share the Homesearch website and a common software system.

The three councils are currently consulting on new allocations policies. The major change to the current policy is that both Gedling and Rushcliffe (but not Broxtowe) propose to restrict applications from people who are judged to have no housing need, but only a desire to move. This will not affect people who are homeless, or who have been assessed as threatened with homelessness; these people will still qualify for housing. However, it should greatly reduce the number of applications from those in low priority that the councils have to deal with, which should free up resources to concentrate on the more urgent cases, such as homelessness prevention. This change is therefore complementary to this strategy, with its renewed focus on working in partnership to prevent homelessness.

Rushcliffe Borough Council adopted their tenancy strategy in April 2012. A tenancy strategy is only an advisory document, and cannot dictate what tenancies Registered Providers must offer. However, it can provide guidance, which is that Registered Providers should consider using fixed term tenancies for social housing in most cases. At the end of the tenancy (which will be for at least five years), they should review whether the household still needs the size and type of accommodation and, if not, should assist them to move to smaller social rented stock, or into the private sector. Over time, this may increase the number of social housing properties becoming available, which may allow homeless households to be rehoused more quickly.

Broxtowe and Gedling borough councils are currently (November 2012) consulting on a joint tenancy strategy with Nottingham City Council. Unlike Rushcliffe's, this does not recommend the use of fixed term tenancies. In the councils' view, the potential gains to be made from reletting are limited, and are outweighed by the impact on communities if tenants see social housing as a transient tenure, from where they are likely to be moved on in a few years. Where providers do choose to use fixed term tenancies, it recommends that they always renew the tenancy at its end unless the tenant has two spare bedrooms, or has adaptations to the property (such as a stairlift or adapted bathroom) that are no longer required.

In practice, the use of fixed term tenancies will be determined by the policies of each Registered Provider, which, as several Registered Providers have properties in all three boroughs, are likely to be the same across the South Notts area. Both tenancy strategies are clear that providers must assist any

¹⁶ [Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England](#), June 2012

tenant whose tenancy they are not renewing to find a new home, and it is not expected that any homelessness will be caused by the use of fixed term tenancies in social housing.

Review of homelessness

Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe borough councils are building on their historic co-operation in housing matters by working towards a joint homelessness strategy and an action plan to be delivered and managed by a joint inter-agency forum of partners involved in tackling and preventing homelessness.

The strategy and action plan need to be based on a full review of homelessness in the area, which takes into account government guidance and extensive consultation with partners. This review uses information gathered between April 2008 and September 2012, which is roughly the period since each of the partner authorities adopted their last homelessness strategy, and figures are for that period unless otherwise stated.

1. How many people are homeless?

1a. Homelessness applications and decisions

The main way that we count homeless people is by reporting the number of people who apply to us under homelessness legislation. For the vast majority of these,¹⁷ we make a “decision” on what duty, if any, we owe to them. Of these, some applications are “accepted”, i. e. we accept that they are:

- a) eligible for assistance
- b) homeless
- c) in priority need
- d) not intentionally homeless
- e) have a local connection to the borough

	Households (2011 Census estimate)	Decisions 2008-12	Decisions per 1000 households ¹⁸	Acceptances 2008-12	Acceptances per 1000 households
Broxtowe	46,800	125	2.7	47	1.0
Gedling	49,400	464	9.4	287	5.8
Rushcliffe	45,800	308	6.7	139	3.0
England	22,063,400	468,870 ¹⁹	21.3	214,650	9.7

Throughout this review, it will be noted that Broxtowe deal with by far the fewest formal homelessness applications of the three boroughs, and Gedling by far the most, despite the three boroughs being of similar size. This is only one aspect of homelessness, however, and it does not necessarily mean that the need for services is any lower in Broxtowe; indeed, there are over 2,000 households on the housing register in Broxtowe, and a significant number of people approaching both the council and advice agencies for assistance. Broxtowe has been identified as a Beacon Council for good practice in

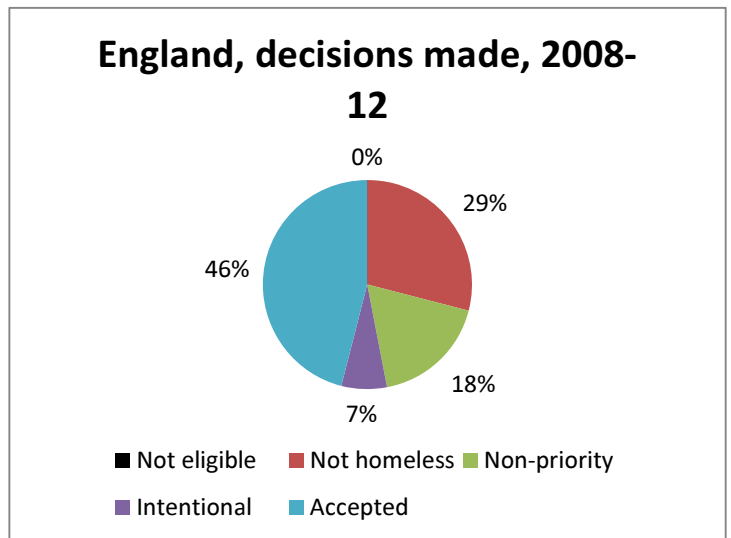
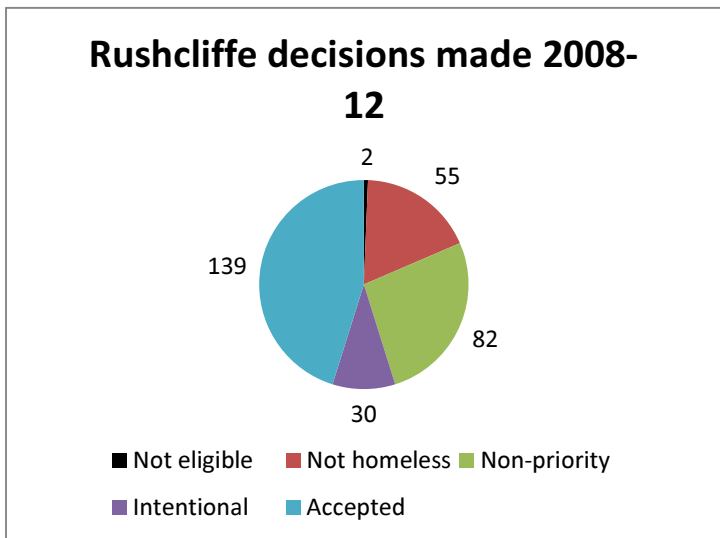
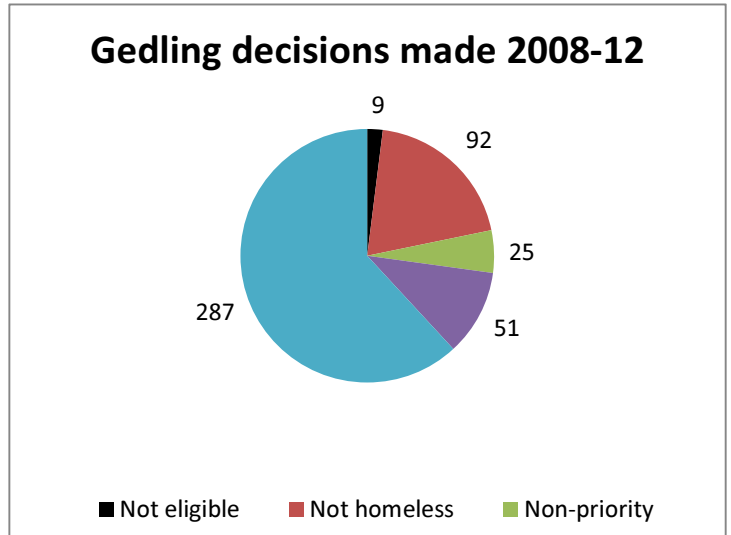
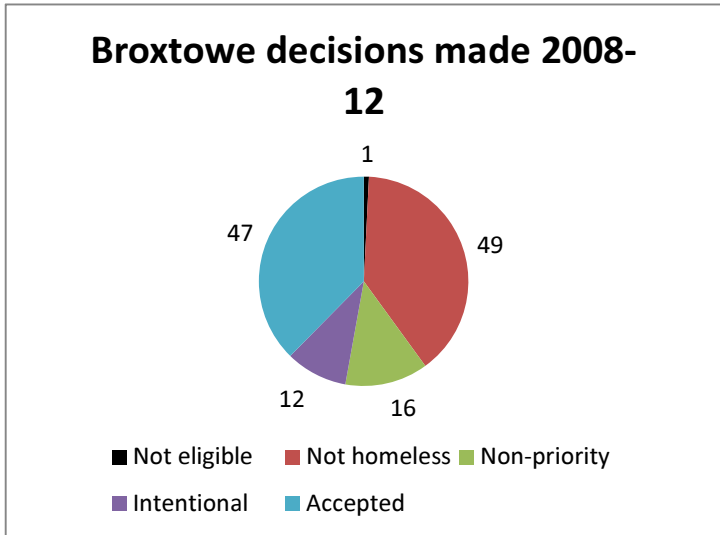
¹⁷ A small number of applications are withdrawn before a decision is made – these have not been included.

¹⁸ N. B. the homelessness figures are for four years, so are much higher than the quarterly figures CLG publish.

¹⁹ National figures are for decisions on eligible households only, so charts on following page do not show “not eligible” decisions for England.

preventing homelessness, and has an active inter-agency forum, which is now being expanded to join up services across South Nottinghamshire, and this may be reflected in the high number of contacts that result in preventions, rather than homelessness applications.

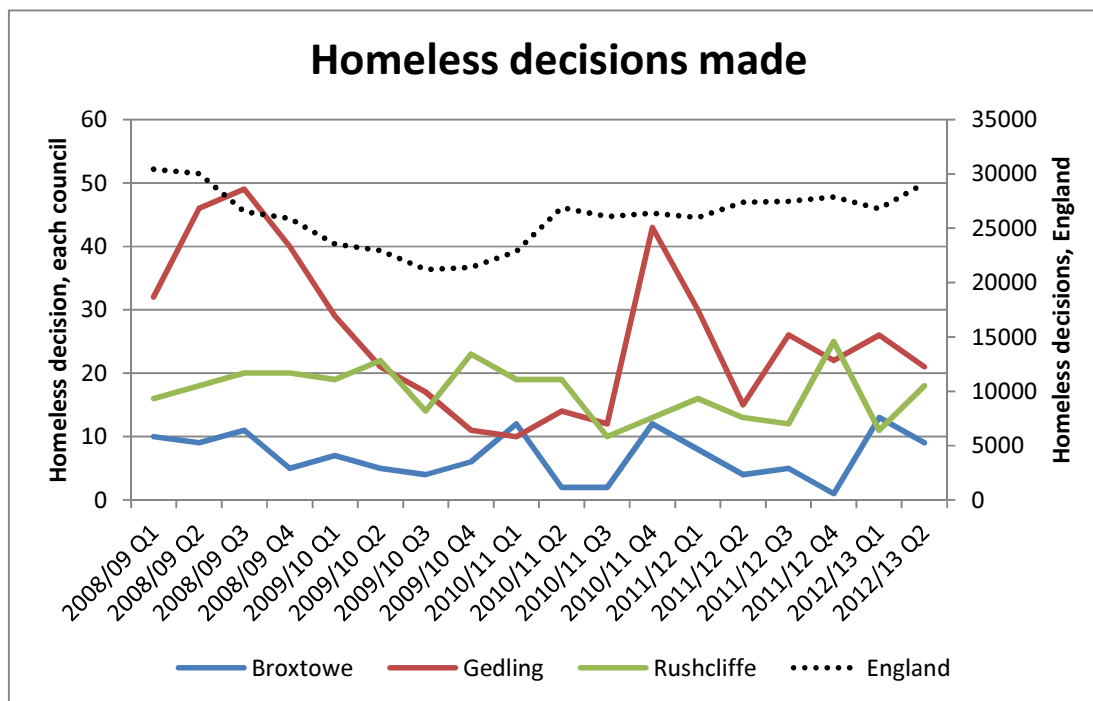
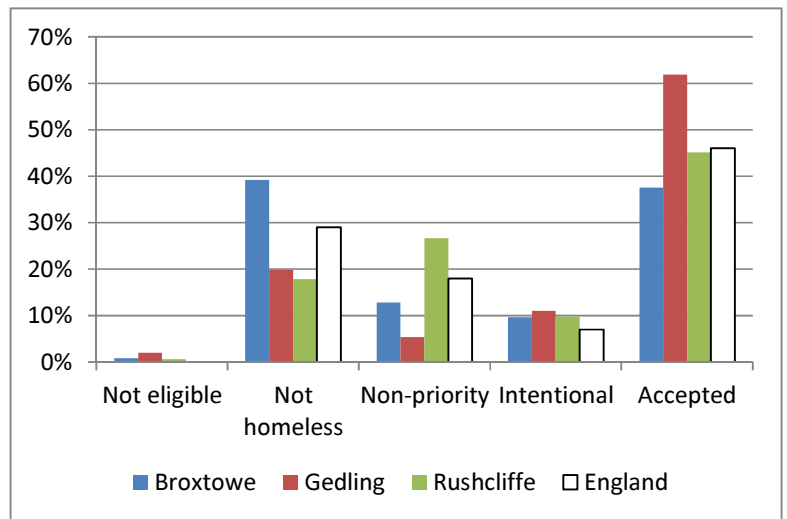
To put the figures in context, all three councils deal with levels of formal homeless presentations many times lower than the average for England, which is to be expected for suburban/rural areas outside London (which sees a disproportionate level of homelessness).



There is some variation between the councils in the outcomes from homelessness applications. Gedling accept a higher proportion of applications, whereas Broxtowe are more likely to make “not homeless” decisions and Rushcliffe more “not in priority need” decisions.

The “not homeless” decisions at Broxtowe may be related to the number of people rehoused into social housing as a preventative measure, i.e. a significant number of people gain council housing before a decision on their case is made, leading to a “not homeless” decision.

Starting from a higher base, Gedling showed a reduction in the number of homeless decisions, with an anomalous rise in early 2011, from which levels have fallen back in line with the long-term trend. Broxtowe and Rushcliffe have continued to show low levels of decisions but with some evidence that the gradual rise in the national figures since 2009 may be starting to be felt in Rushcliffe particularly. In general, all three councils have achieved large reductions in homelessness over the past ten years, which has demonstrated the success and the savings made by investing in homelessness prevention methods.

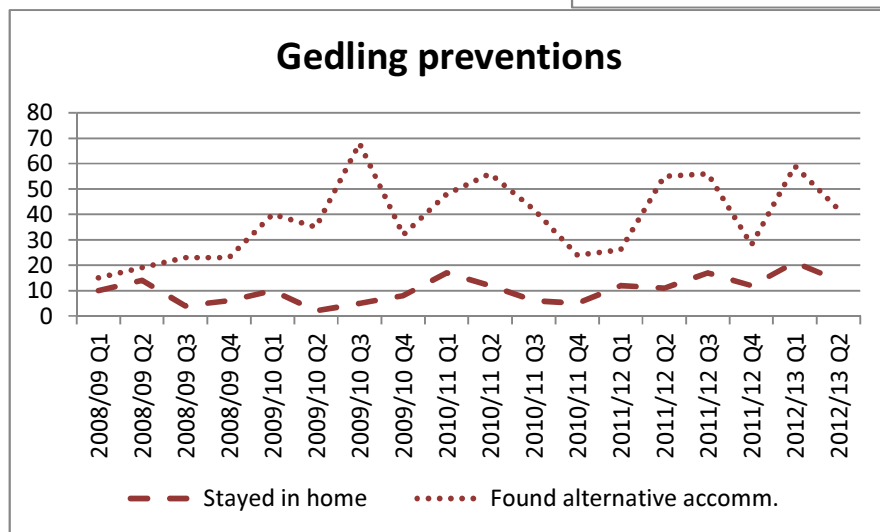
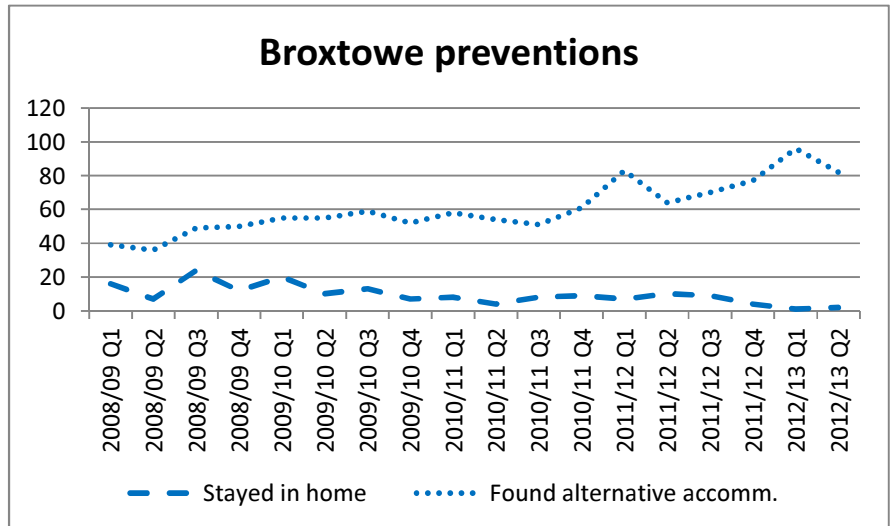


Conclusion 1a: the long-term decline in statutory homelessness has levelled off in the past three years

1b. Successful homelessness preventions

The figures for decisions on homeless applications only represent a small proportion of the people who approach us for advice and assistance about housing. Where a person is threatened with homelessness, we aim to work with them and find a way of preventing this, and we successfully prevent many more people from becoming homeless than we take homeless applications from.

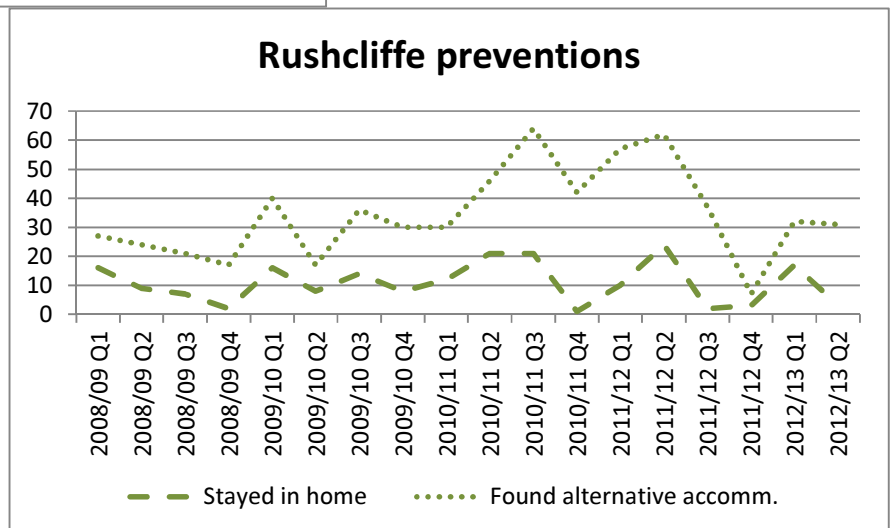
Broxtowe is exceptional in seeing an almost constant rise in the number of homeless preventions from quarter to quarter. Preventions are mostly achieved by conciliation between a young person and their family, resolving Housing Benefit problems and debt advice. Where a person needs to move home, preventions mostly come from social housing lettings, with incentives to private landlords and supported accommodation also making a significant contribution.



Gedling has shown continuing strong performance in preventions, with the drop in preventions in 2010/11 Q4 coinciding with the “spike” in applications taken at that time.

Gedling uses the whole range of prevention tools, with no particular dependence on any one technique of keeping a person in their home, and with almost as many people who need to move assisted into the private rented sector as into social housing.

Levels of homeless preventions in Rushcliffe have built up well over the past four years. Rushcliffe has had particular success with negotiation and advocacy to help clients remain in private rented accommodation, and with resolving Housing Benefit problems, but uses all the tools to some extent.



Conclusion 1b: we prevent much more homelessness than we accept, and we need to ensure this continues

1c. People in housing need approaching other agencies

Notts Housing Advice Service, which is funded by a number of local authorities, saw a considerable increase in the number of people approaching them from the three boroughs between 2009/10 and 2010/11. The figures for 2011/12 are not directly comparable, because staff capacity was reduced, and so fewer appointments could be offered, but have been included to show a full picture. This does not reflect a reduction in demand for the service – feedback from the service is that they are approached by many more people than they have capacity to assist.

Borough	Year	Total cases dealt with	Total cases where homelessness prevented
Broxtowe	2009/10	14	11
	2010/11	50	40
	2011/12	22	21
Gedling	2009/10	37	34
	2010/11	67	57
	2011/12	89	83
Rushcliffe	2009/10	34	24
	2010/11	63	54
	2011/12	34	33

Rushcliffe Advice Network (RAN) co-ordinates three volunteer-led advice centres, in West Bridgford, Cotgrave and Radcliffe on Trent, as well as advice provided through The Friary. The Friary offers a drop-in centre for homeless people in West Bridgford, which is used by people from across the area, including many from the City of Nottingham. In 2011-12, the Friary recorded an average of 298 visits per week.

In the twelve months ending July 2012, the RAN advised 548 clients on housing matters – an average of 46 per month. Given that each advice centre is open for only one or two mornings per week (the Friary offers drop-in three mornings a week), such a high level of requests for advice clearly shows the level of housing insecurity even in a relatively affluent borough with very high levels of owner-occupation.

Conclusion 1c: large numbers of people are seeking housing advice from agencies other than the councils

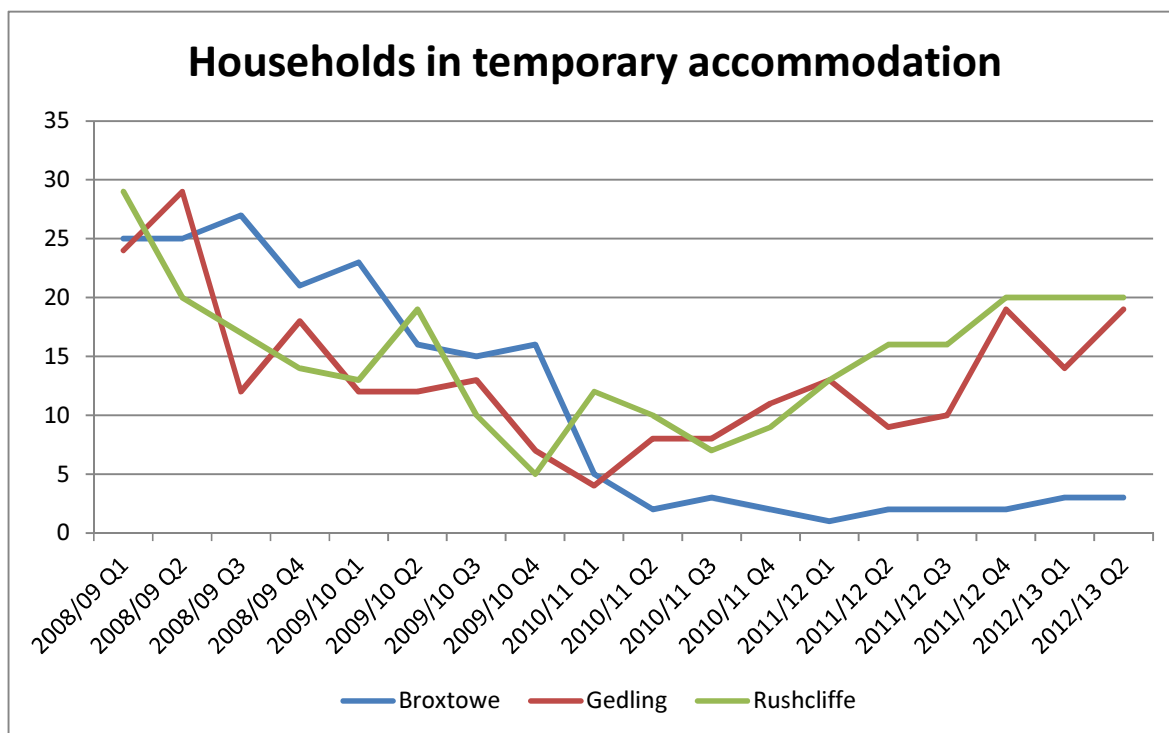
Most support services for homeless and vulnerable people are commissioned by local authorities through the Supporting People programme, which is administered by Nottinghamshire County Council. Data is available showing the number of new service users for these services each year. This, of course, only reflects the capacity of the services provided. A full breakdown of numbers users for each individual service, including the client outcomes achieved, is available on request.

	Number of new Supporting People service users in year, South Notts			
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Accommodation-based services	192	283	233	127
All relevant services	787	1038	1021	660

1d. Households living in temporary accommodation

Each council reports a “snapshot” on the last night of each quarter of the number of people it has in temporary accommodation under homelessness provisions. The numbers accommodated by all councils fell sharply from 2003 onwards, and continued to fall from the launch of the last strategy through to early 2010. Broxtowe’s numbers then remained at a very low level, with as few as one household accommodated in 2011/12 Q1, whereas the numbers for Gedling and Rushcliffe began to rise again.

This disparity is clearly linked to the lower levels of homeless applications in Broxtowe, but may also be related to the introduction of choice-based lettings in Broxtowe (where the council accommodates homeless households and lets its own housing stock) and in the other two authorities (where lettings are managed separately by the stock transfer housing associations). Further investigation is needed to fully understand this.



In addition to ongoing monitoring, the three councils join with the other Nottinghamshire district councils, Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council to carry out the annual Homeless Watch survey – a fortnight-long snapshot based on service user questionnaires completed by agencies working with homeless people, and covering demographic

Conclusion 1d: numbers of people in temporary accommodation in Gedling and Rushcliffe have been rising

analysis, support needs and reasons for homelessness. The initial results of the 2012 survey will be included in this review when available.

1e. Rough sleeping

Rough sleeping is relatively uncommon in the partnership area, but it does happen. The three boroughs surround the City of Nottingham, and it is more common for people to sleep rough in city centres than suburban areas (although levels of rough sleeping in Nottingham are also low compared to other cities of a similar size). In order to provide support where it is needed, and also to better appreciate the scale of the issue, the No Second Night Out approach was extended from Nottingham City to cover the whole county from June 2012 onwards. No Second Night Out means the public are encouraged to telephone a 24 hour hotline (**0800 066 5356**) if they see a person sleeping rough so that street outreach workers from Framework can be directed to make contact with the person, assess their needs and try to help them access services to get them off the street.

Between 18 June and 30 September 2012, the street outreach team worked with 39 people reported as potentially sleeping rough across the South Notts area, although some of these may have slept out for only one night or part of a night; some may successfully have been prevented from having to sleep rough at all. 4 were identified as having a local connection with Broxtowe; 4 with Gedling; and 5 with Rushcliffe. The remaining 26 had no local connection to the three boroughs – their connection may have been with Nottingham City, or they may have travelled to the Nottingham area from elsewhere.

15 of the 39 reported alcohol abuse as either a primary or secondary support need, 12 were former offenders, 8 had mental health needs and 6 were using substances other than alcohol. 28 were UK nationals and 6 were Polish, with 1 each from the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania and 2 from other countries. This shows some fit with the very high numbers of rough sleepers from Eastern Europe observed in the City of Nottingham in the 2011 Homeless Watch survey, and confirms that alcohol use and an offending history are strongly associated with rough sleeping.

Although there are a small number of rough sleepers, the vulnerability of this client group and the effect of sleeping rough on their health and prospects for resettlement mean that it is urgent that they can be referred off the streets as soon as possible. Unfortunately, there is very little accommodation for single homeless people in the South Notts area that they can access immediately. However, for some clients the outreach team could refer them to options such as Nottingham Nightstop, or potentially access emergency accommodation via the local authority if the client is vulnerable and likely to be “in priority need” (see section 2d). If the client has a local connection to the City of Nottingham, they may also be able to access the more extensive services for single homeless people, such as hostels, that are available there.

Conclusion 1e: there are small numbers of rough sleepers, but the impact on health makes their situation urgent

Of the 39 rough sleepers identified in the first quarter of the team’s work, 14 were placed in either temporary or permanent accommodation and 3 were reconnected with services elsewhere in the country where they had a local connection. The number of rough sleepers the street outreach team works with will be monitored through the South Notts Interagency Homelessness Forum to inform future action.

This review is not intended to give a definitive number of people who have been homeless or at risk of homelessness in the three boroughs. It is acknowledged that many of the people who present to the councils and have used the other services listed will be the same people. However, the information in the review should give an overview of the scale of the issue to inform the response that is needed from statutory and voluntary partners.

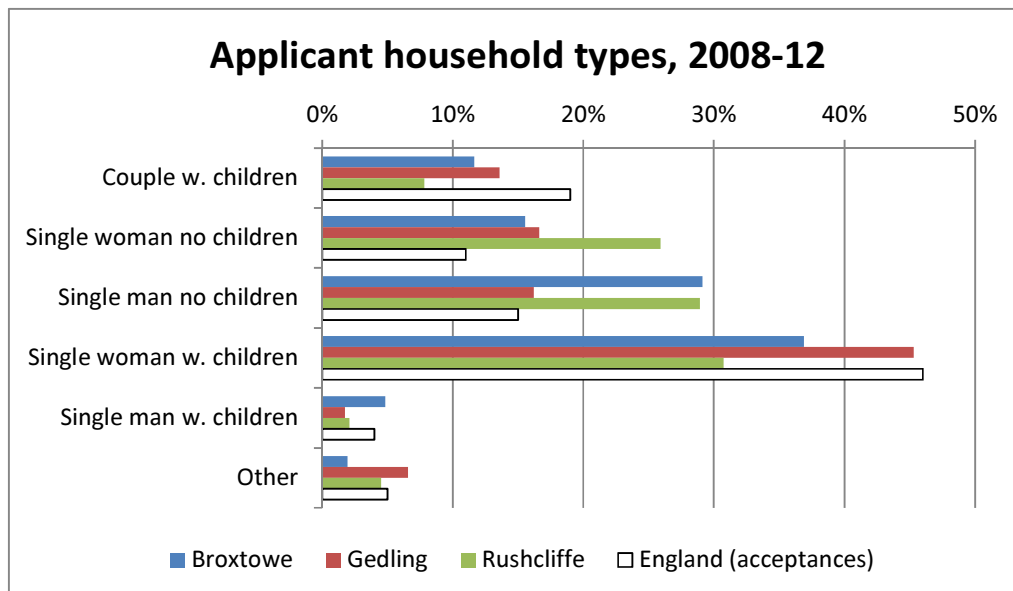
2. Who becomes homeless?

Homelessness can happen to anyone. Even people with a well-paid job and their own home can be vulnerable to illness, accident or financial crisis that could quickly lead to the risk of homelessness. However, there are certain patterns in the demographic profile of the people who present to the partner councils as homeless.

2a. Household type

More or less half of homeless applicants have children. All councils see significant proportions of single homeless people, but for Rushcliffe they are more than half of all cases, which appears exceptional. However, comparison to the national figures should be treated with caution, as these only report acceptances, whereas the local figures are for all applications. Single people would not normally be accepted as homeless and in priority need unless other special circumstances (such as disability, or being a care leaver) applied, hence the higher proportions seen across the partner councils. On the other hand, families with children are in priority need. These figures could therefore go some way to explaining the higher proportion of acceptances in Gedling and “non-priority” decisions in Rushcliffe (see section 1a). They are also important as they show our response to homelessness needs to focus on the needs of both families and single homeless people.

	Broxtowe	Gedling	Rushcliffe	England ²⁰
Families with children	56%	61%	43%	69%
Single people	42%	33%	53%	26%
“Other” ²¹	2%	6%	4%	5%



Conclusion 2a: roughly equal numbers of single people and families become homeless

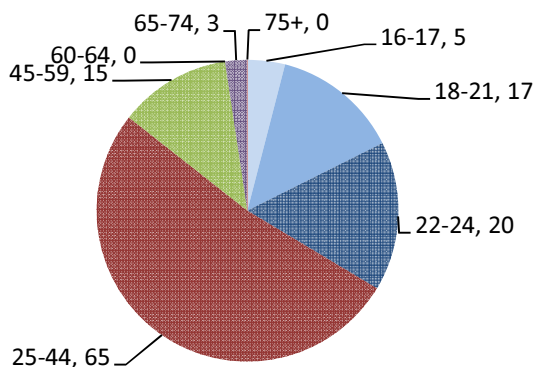
²⁰ [CLG Live Table 780](#). Figures for England are for acceptances only, whereas local figures include all applications.

²¹ Other could include couples with no children, parents and adult children etc.

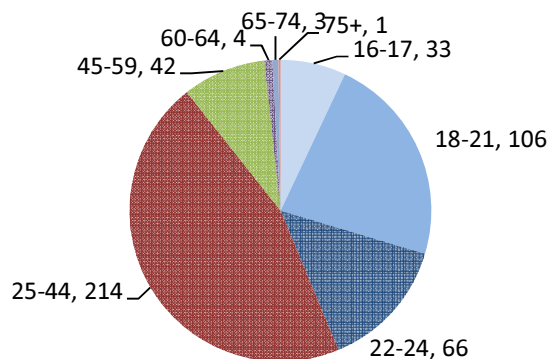
2b. Age

Although it can happen to anyone, homelessness overwhelmingly affects young people and young families. There is a high risk of becoming homeless in young adulthood, for reasons such as limited finances, short-term and insecure employment, and the risk of family breakdowns, leading to young people leaving the family home (this is still the most common cause of homelessness).

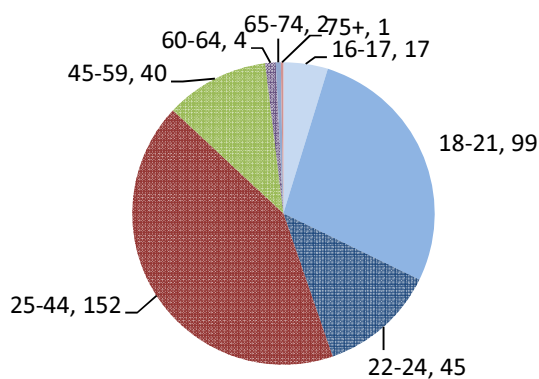
Age of Broxtowe applicants, 2008-12



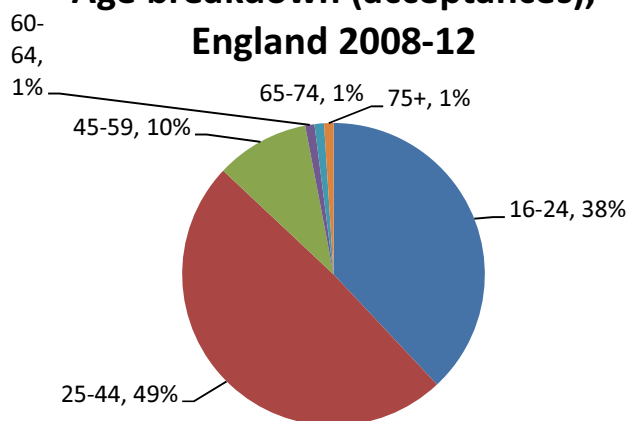
Age of Gedling applicants 2008-12



Age of Rushcliffe applicants 2008-12



Age breakdown (acceptances), England 2008-12



The age profiles of homeless applicants in the partner councils are not very different to the national profile of homeless acceptances.²² Very few people over 60 apply as homeless. This may be partly due to the factors described above that primarily affect younger people,

**Conclusion 2b:
homelessness largely
affects young people;
fewer people over 45
become homeless**

²² Reported age bands are those used on the P1E return and published at national level. 16 – 24 age band has been broken down to show finer detail including number of 16/17 year old applicants. This is not available for national figures.

and partly due to the ready availability of sheltered housing for older people in most places.

2c. Ethnic background

	Broxtowe	Gedling	Rushcliffe	England
% ethnic minority ²³ population ²⁴	10.5%	9.7%	9.7%	20%
% ethnic minority homelessness	15.2%	13.1%	11.4%	27% ²⁵
Most common ethnic minority presenting	Asian Pakistani 6 cases	Mixed White & Black Caribbean 15 cases	Asian Indian 6 cases	
2 nd most common ethnic minority presenting	White (Other) Mixed White & Black Caribbean 4 cases each	White (Other) 8 cases	White (Other) Black Caribbean 5 cases each	

Although there are only low actual numbers of people from any background other than White British presenting as homeless, the partner councils reflect the national picture of people from ethnic minorities being over-represented in the homelessness figures compared to the overall population. There may be many intervening variables here to do with income, tenure and employment. The councils may wish to look at national research or guidance to understand this issue, or to consider carrying out more locally focussed research on housing needs in their communities, given that the last comparable study was carried out in 2004.²⁶

As noted in section 1e, there are small but potentially significant numbers of people from Eastern Europe sleeping rough in the South Notts area, which appears to be a local manifestation of a strong pattern seen nationally in recent years. All the authorities have had applications from people in this ethnic group, but the numbers are small and spread across a four year period. It may be that these people are not approaching the local authorities for assistance, or are being advised that there will be no duty to accommodate them, so they are not making homelessness applications that show up in these figures.

Conclusion 2c1: ethnic minority households are more likely to become homeless, but no one ethnic group in particular

The councils have considered the needs of Gypsies and Travellers who may become homeless. There have been no homelessness applications since 2008 from Gypsies or Travellers, but homelessness manifests itself differently in this population; it is more likely to lead to unauthorised encampments or applications to develop land for caravan pitches than to requests for assistance from the council. Unauthorised encampments of Gypsies and Travellers are relatively uncommon, and are reported to the

²³ "Ethnic minority" is used here to include all backgrounds except White British.

²⁴ 2011 Census.

²⁵ [CLG Live Table 771](#) – acceptances only

²⁶ [Communities in Focus](#): a study of the housing needs of Black and Ethnic Minority Communities in South Nottinghamshire

County Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Monitoring Group. There are no Gypsy or Traveller sites in Broxtowe or Gedling, and 8 pitches (6 of which have temporary planning permission) in Rushcliffe. All three councils have taken the long term requirements for caravan pitches into account in their Local Development Frameworks, and these assumptions should be tested in public examination in 2013.

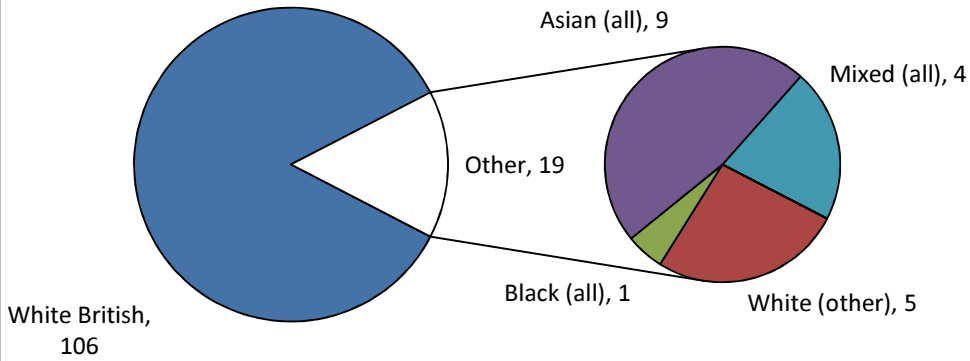
A specialist support service for Gypsies and Travellers at risk of homelessness was discontinued in 2010,²⁷ but its work was focussed more in northern parts of the County with larger Gypsy and Traveller populations. The councils will therefore have to keep under review whether the absence of this service leads to any change in the current situation.

Conclusion 2c2: the needs of Eastern European migrants and Gypsies and Travellers need to be kept under careful review

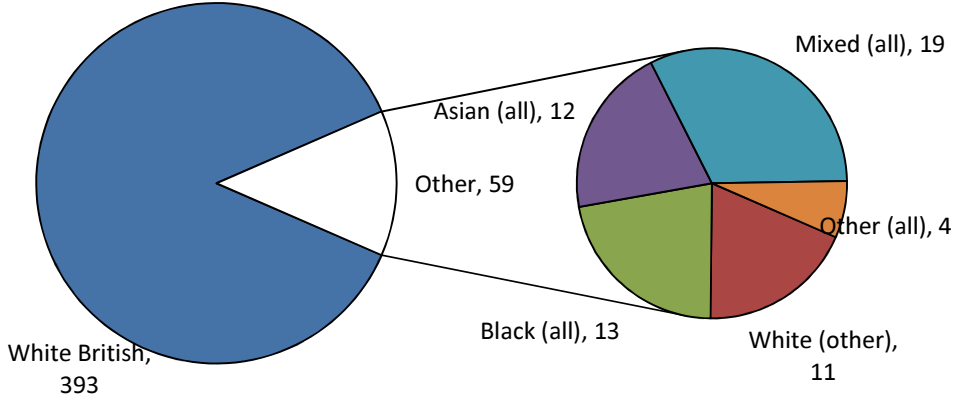
The following charts indicate the number of homelessness applications from people in each broad ethnic group. Ethnic origins as listed on the P1E form have been grouped together for visual clarity, but a full breakdown is available on request.

²⁷ Travelling Together, funded jointly by Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council through the Supporting People programme.

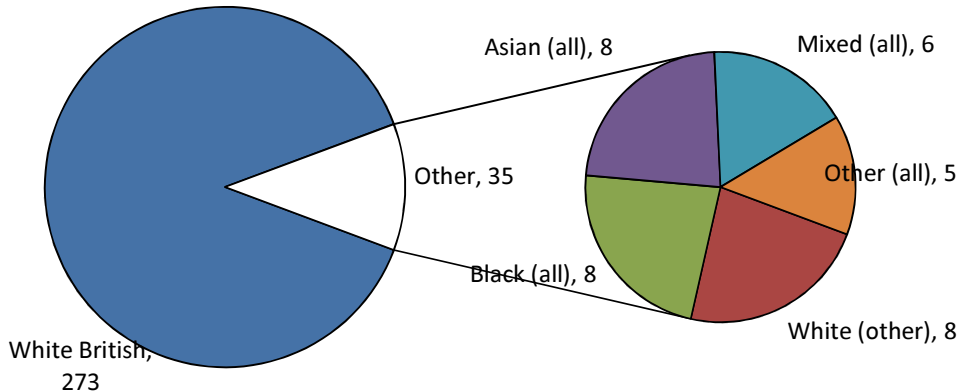
Ethnic background of applicants, Broxtowe 2008-12



Ethnic background of applicants, Gedling 2008-12



Ethnic background of applicants, Rushcliffe 2008-12



2d. Disability

It is important to ensure that homelessness and prevention services are accessible to everyone, including those with a physical or learning disability. This includes practical steps such as ensuring there is temporary accommodation available that is suitable for those with limited mobility, and that appropriate services are in place for people who might need extra support, such as applicants with learning disabilities.

Up until 2012, Gedling Borough Council was the only one of the three authorities recording disability on their homelessness software system. From January 2012 onwards, all three authorities adopted a shared software system that allows for comprehensive reporting of households' disabilities. For the first eleven months of 2012, a small but significant number of homeless applicants reported that they had some form of disability. The number of applicants with a physical disability was comparable to the prevalence rate in the wider population (9.9%²⁸). The number of applicants with learning disabilities was somewhat higher than the prevalence rate in the wider population (2.4%²⁹). Numbers were too small to draw any firm conclusions at this stage, but this client group needs to be kept under review, and will be examined again in a review of homelessness applications against all the protected characteristics of diversity in 2013.

	Broxtowe	Gedling	Rushcliffe
Applications 1 Jan – 30 Nov 2012	32	105	75
Applicants with any type of disability or mental illness	6	28	17
Applicants with physical disability	3	9	7
Applicants with learning disability	2	2	4
Applicants with sensory impairment	0	3	1
Applicants with a mental illness	2	17	8

2e. Priority need

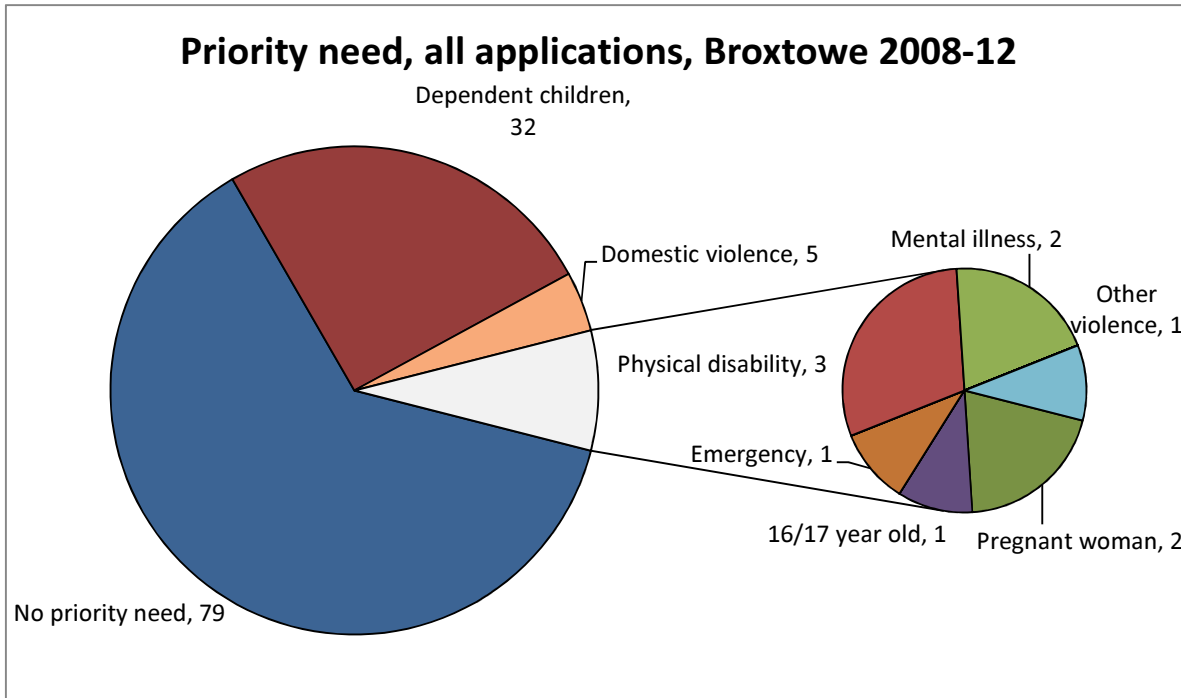
Local authorities are only under a “main homeless duty” to secure accommodation for a household if they are satisfied the household has a “priority need”. However, the authorities record whether all applicants have a priority need when making their enquiries. Where a household has more than one priority need, they are treated hierarchically, with the one at the top of the list being recorded for the

²⁸ Estimated number of adults aged 16 – 64 with a moderate or serious physical disability in 2012 – 3,269,639 ([PANSI](#)). Population of England in same age range, March 2011 – 33,015,300 (Census 2011).

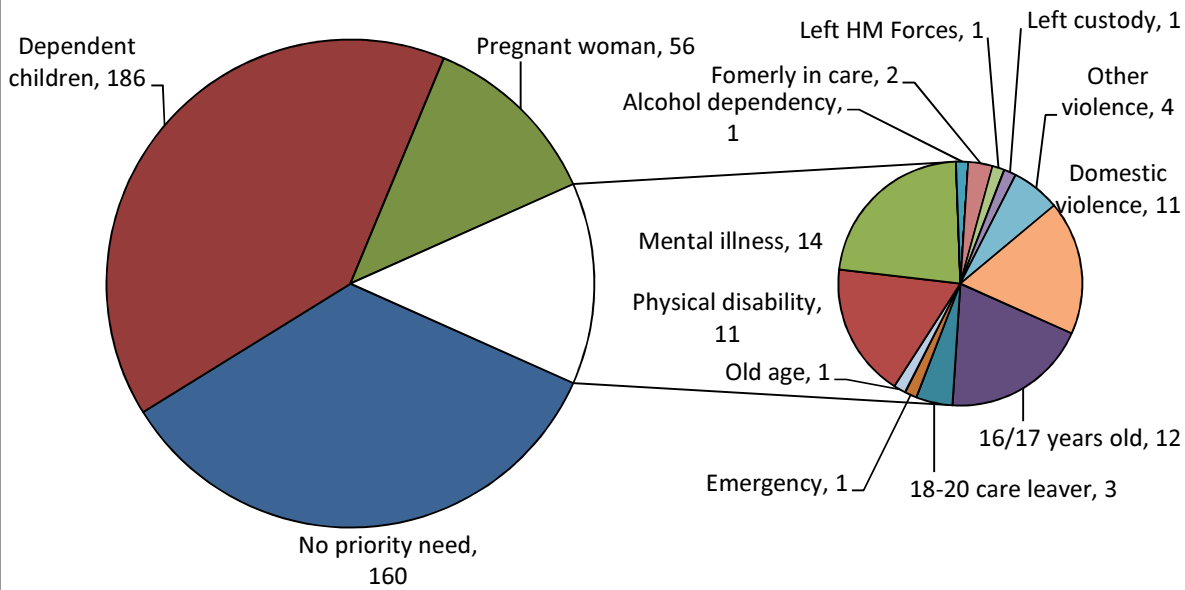
²⁹ Estimated number of adults aged 16 – 64 with a learning disability – 800,260 ([PANSI](#)). Census data as note 27.

purposes of the statistical return. This means that the number of households with disability, mental illness, substance dependency or vulnerability due to leaving care, custody or HM Forces etc. may be understated if the household also has dependent children or contains a pregnant woman.

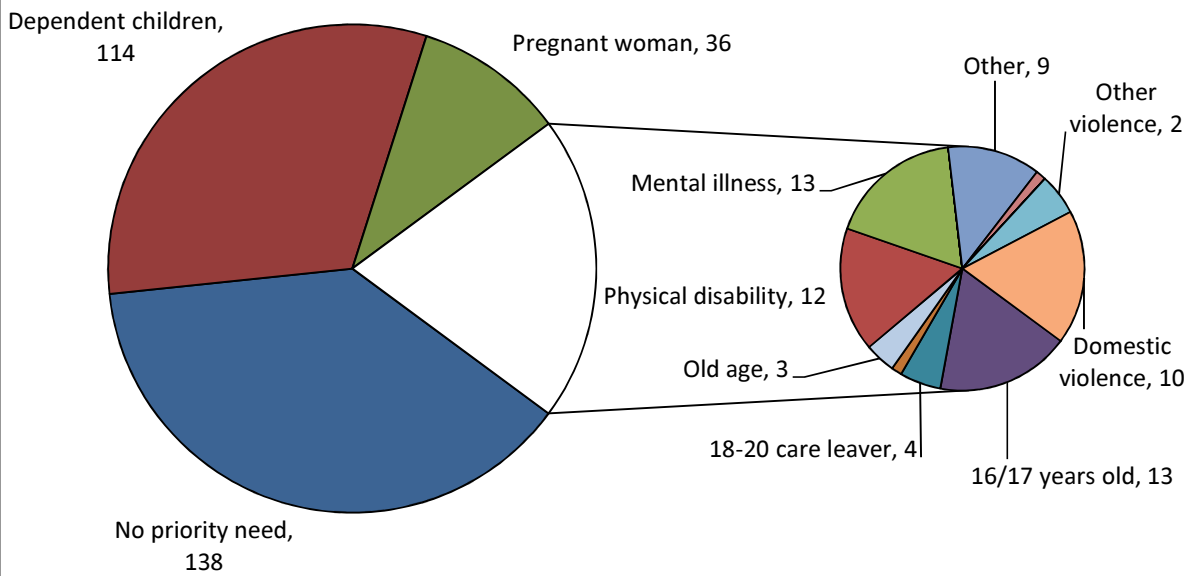
It is not possible to compare this to the national picture, as only data on accepted households is collected, in which all clients have a priority need.



Priority need, all applications, Gedling 2008-12



Priority need, all applications, Rushcliffe 2008-12

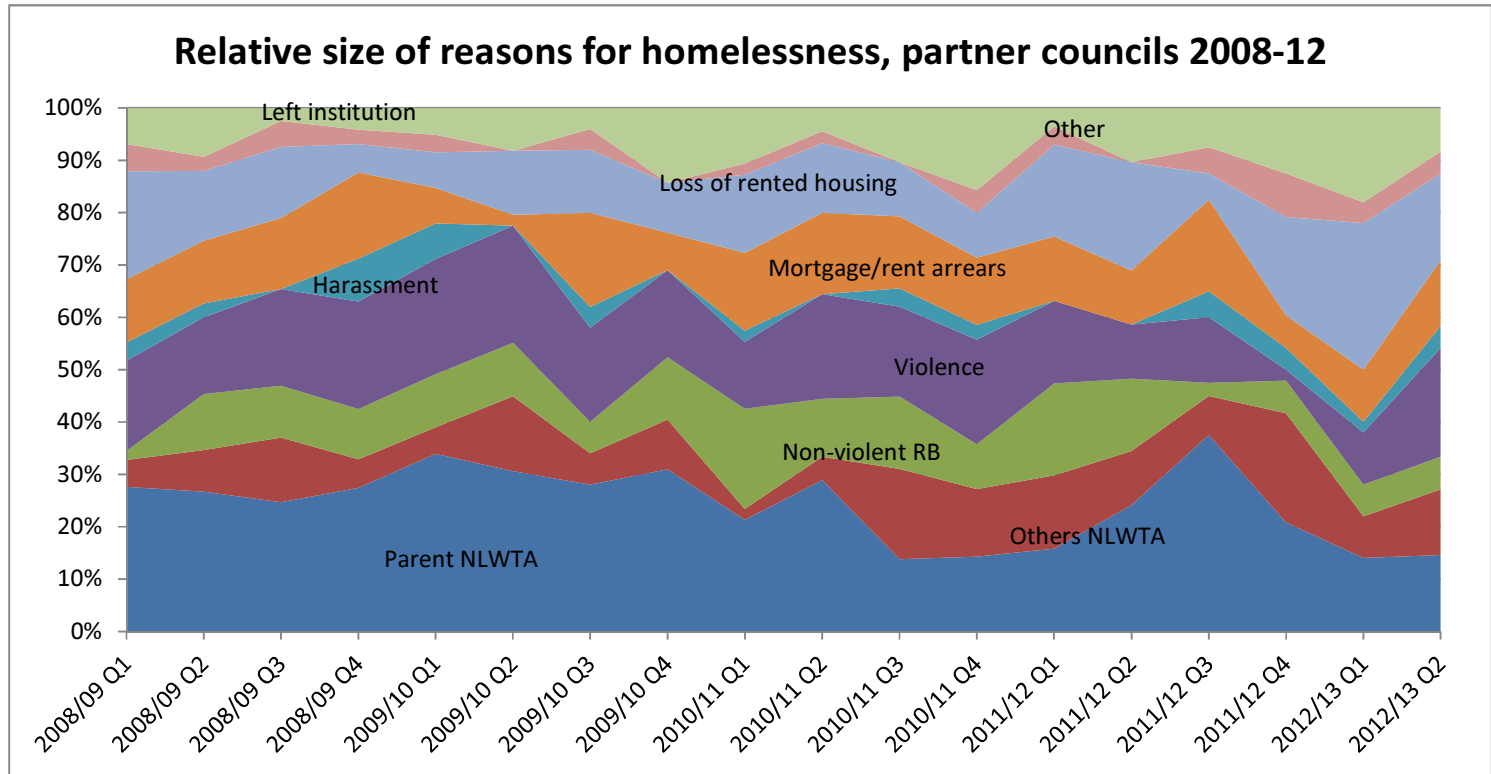


Conclusion 2d: other than children and pregnancy, the most common priority needs are being 16/17, mental illness and physical disability

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Alison Bennett – Service Manager, Housing & Localities on (0115) 901 3696

3. Why do people become homeless?

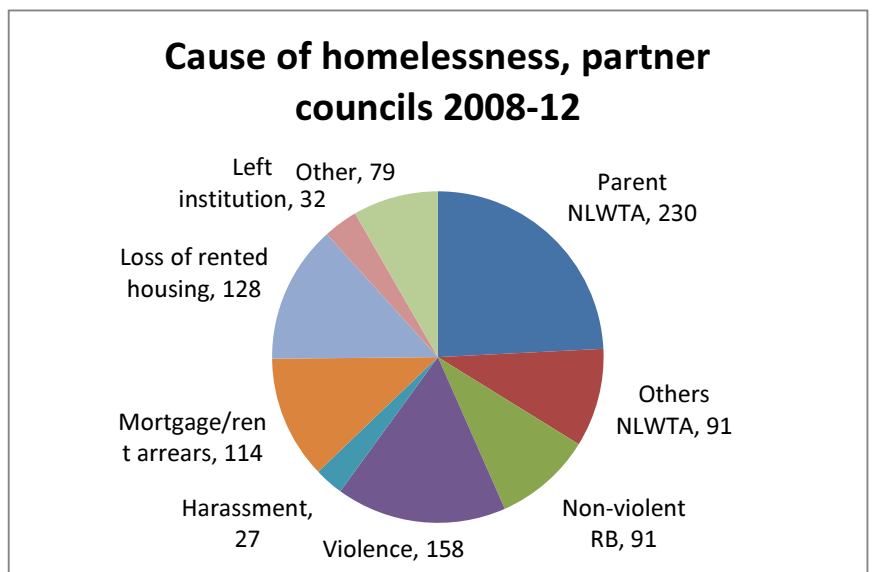
The breakdown of reasons why people become homeless is possibly the most important piece of data in the review, as it guides the preventative actions the local authorities will put in place to reduce homelessness in the future. The thickness of each band in the chart below shows the relative importance of each reason for homelessness over time.



NLWTA – “no longer willing to accommodate”

Parents no longer being able or willing to accommodate a person remains by some distance the most common reason for homelessness, accounting for almost a quarter of presentations in the area over the last four years, and disproportionately affecting younger people. A variation on this is where the young person is pregnant or has a young baby, which is contributing to friction in the family home.

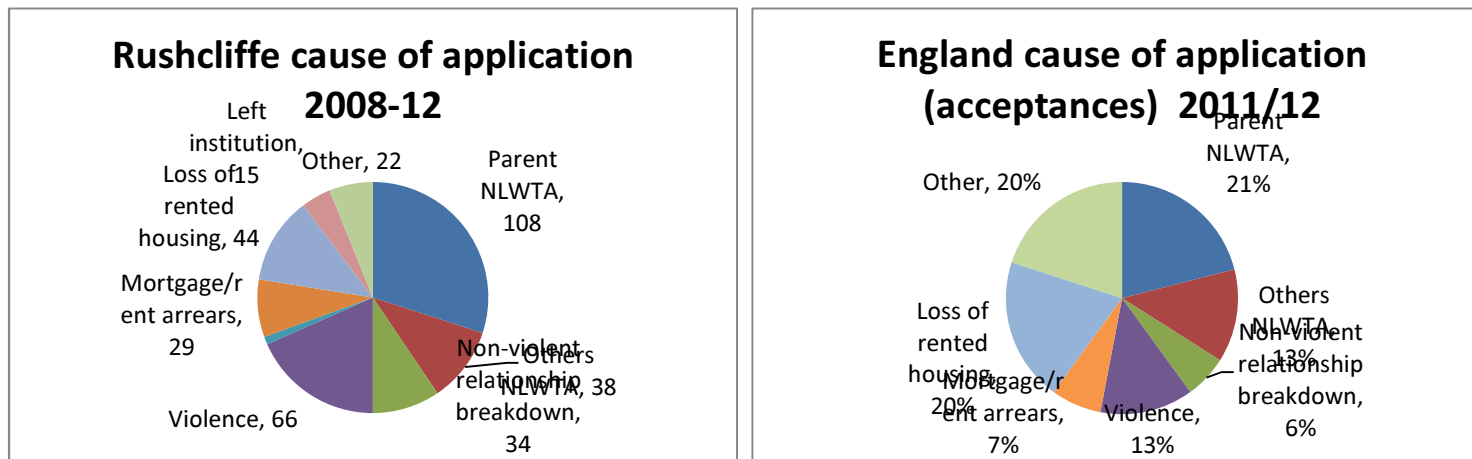
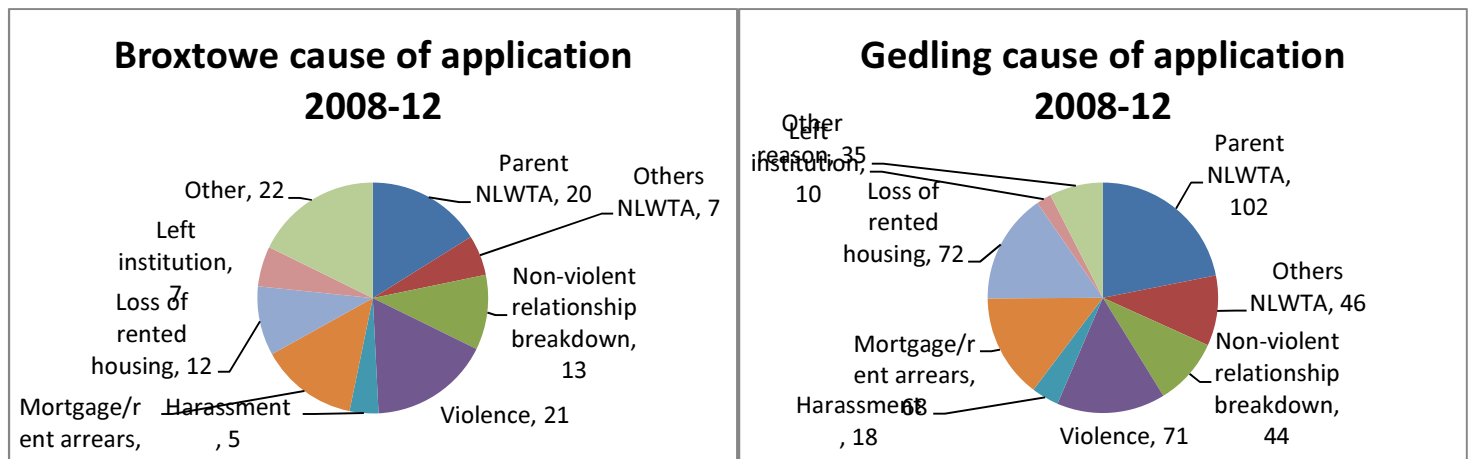
Violence (more than three quarters of which is domestic violence from a partner) has been a significant cause of homelessness over the review period.



Overall violence has decreased in the last year, but domestic violence has increased in the past six months.

Loss of rented housing (other than due to rent arrears), which includes private landlords giving a tenant notice to quit, has increased in importance since 2008, accounting for 13% of presentations over the review period, with financial problems (mortgage/rent arrears) consistently important as well.

When people are recorded as homeless because others are no longer willing to accommodate them, this may often represent a temporary housing arrangement coming to an end, and as such may sometimes be a “secondary reason” for homelessness. Tackling the other causes of homelessness would be likely to result in numbers in this category reducing as well.



Conclusion 3a2: violence, rent/mortgage arrears and loss of rented housing are other significant causes

4. Where do people become homeless?

We mapped homelessness applications using the postcode of the applicant's last settled address to look at any geographical patterns.

It has not been possible to extract postcodes to map the applications made to Broxtowe Borough Council during the review period.

Not all homelessness applications made to Gedling Borough Council during the review period had a postcode recorded. However, a sample of 204 postcodes were available, which is adequate to look for general patterns. Applications were spread quite evenly across most of the urban area, but with concentrations in the Netherfield and Bestwood areas, which match up with two of the most deprived areas of the Borough.³⁰ 14 applicants were previously living in the City of Nottingham, five in Broxtowe and single numbers in most of the other neighbouring districts. There were eight "outliers not represented on the map – applications made from all across England. However, any or all of these may have had a local connection to Gedling; whereas some may have been owed a duty despite having no local connection, for instance, if they were fleeing domestic violence.

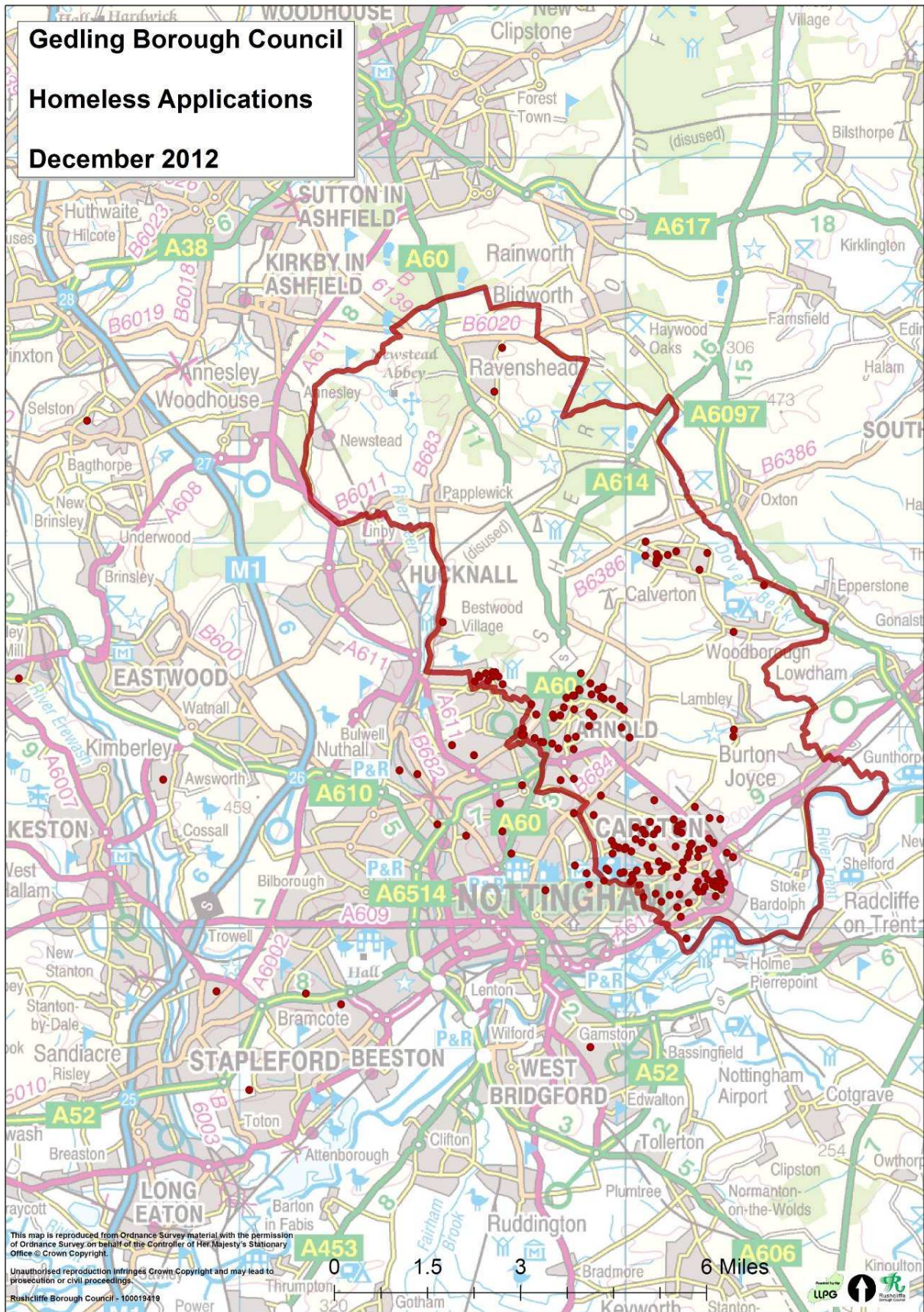
The distribution of applications made to Rushcliffe Borough Council does not vary greatly from what would be expected from where the population lives. Most applications are made from West Bridgford and the larger villages/small towns of Rushcliffe. Around 30 applications (approx. 1/10th of the total) were living in the City of Nottingham, smaller numbers in Broxtowe and Gedling, and a scattering from many of the other towns and cities in the region. Three "outliers" are not represented on the map – applications made from Norwich, Newbury and Teeside. Again, any of these may have had a local connection to Rushcliffe, whatever their last settled address.

³⁰ Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2010, available at <http://opendatacommunities.org/deprivation/map>.

Gedling Borough Council

Homeless Applications

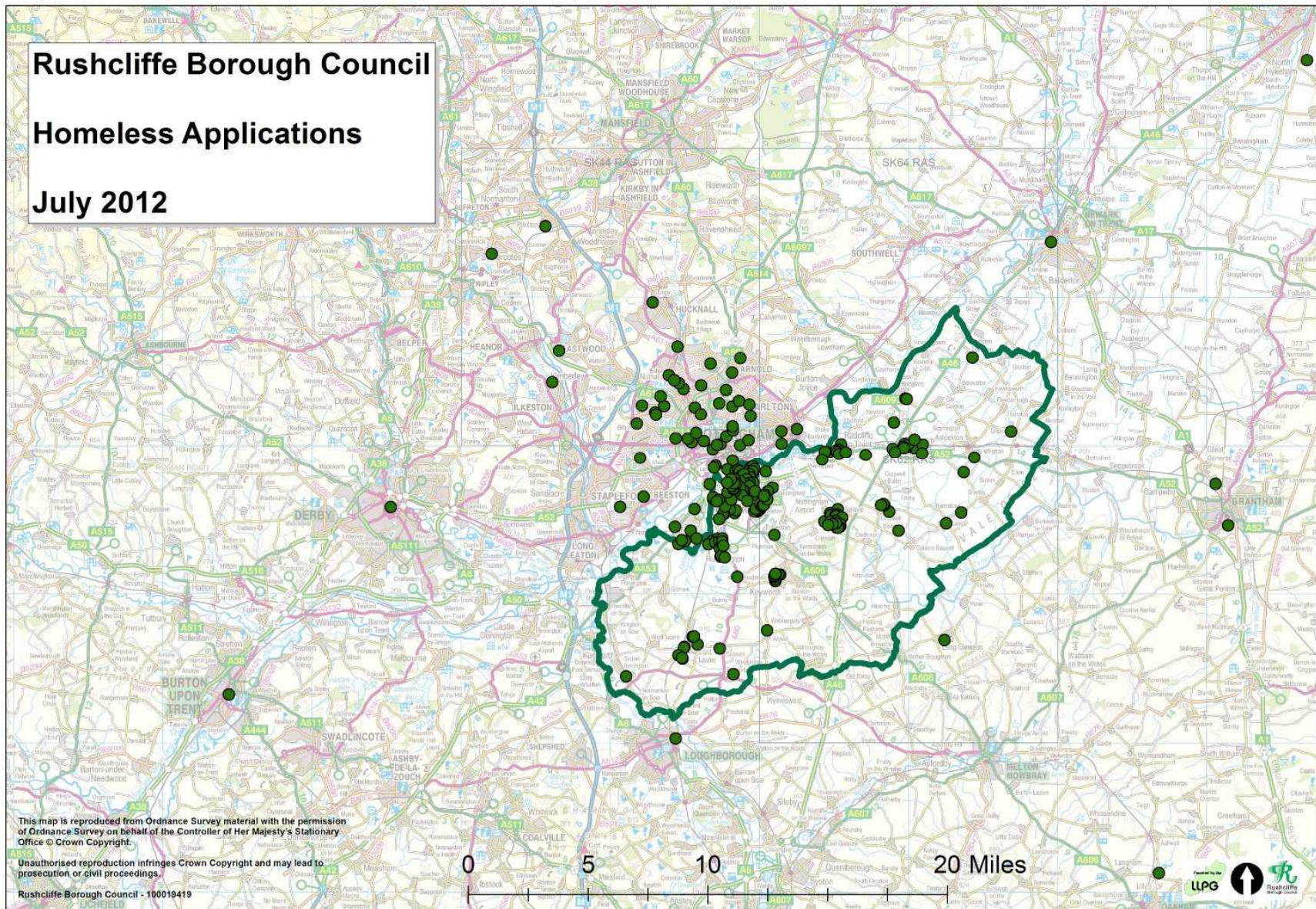
December 2012



Rushcliffe Borough Council

Homeless Applications

July 2012



5. What changes are we likely to see in homelessness?

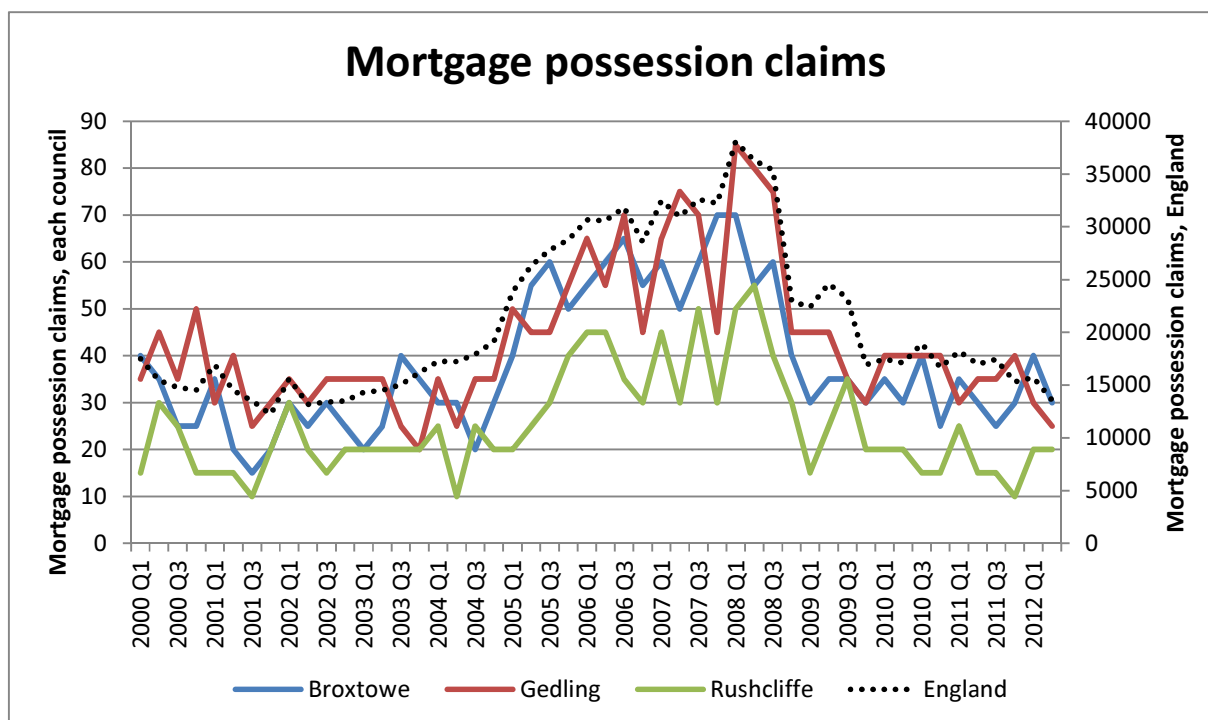
An important element of planning to meet need in the future must involve looking at factors that could increase, decrease or change the nature of demand for services, both those provided by the councils and other partners. The factors that impact on homelessness can be broadly divided into two areas, economic and health, and there is a wealth of information available in both areas.

5a. Economic and financial factors

These factors relate to the affordability of housing compared to household incomes, and the likelihood of people losing accommodation and being unable to find a suitable and affordable alternative. This is clearly linked to a number of the principal causes of homelessness, such as mortgage/rent arrears and loss of rented housing, but may also contribute to other causes such as relationship breakdown and family or friends no longer being willing to accommodate a person. The average house price in the East Midlands increased by 89% between 2001 and 2011, but average earnings increased by only 31% - evidence of a growing affordability problem that is forecast to become more severe.³¹

Levels of possession claims issued by mortgage lenders rose sharply in all three boroughs in the middle of the last decade, peaking just at the beginning of the financial crisis and subsequent recession. This fits closely with the national pattern (dotted line). Since then, mortgage possession claims have fallen back into line with levels seen from 2000 to 2004, suggesting that lower interest rates, combined with action by central and local government, such as the Mortgage Rescue Scheme and changes to court procedures requiring lenders to engage to a greater degree with borrowers, have been effective in limiting the impact of the economic situation.

³¹ National Housing Federation, [Home Truths 2012, England](#)



Source: [Shelter Housing Databank](#)

However, there is a clear risk that if interest rates rise from their current very low level, the knock-on effect on mortgage costs could lead to an increase in the number of households that cannot afford their mortgage. Many commentators see this as a major risk in the UK housing market,³² and low levels of court action disguise the fact that more than 150,000 households nationwide are in serious arrears on their mortgage, although this figure has gradually declined since its 2009 peak.³³

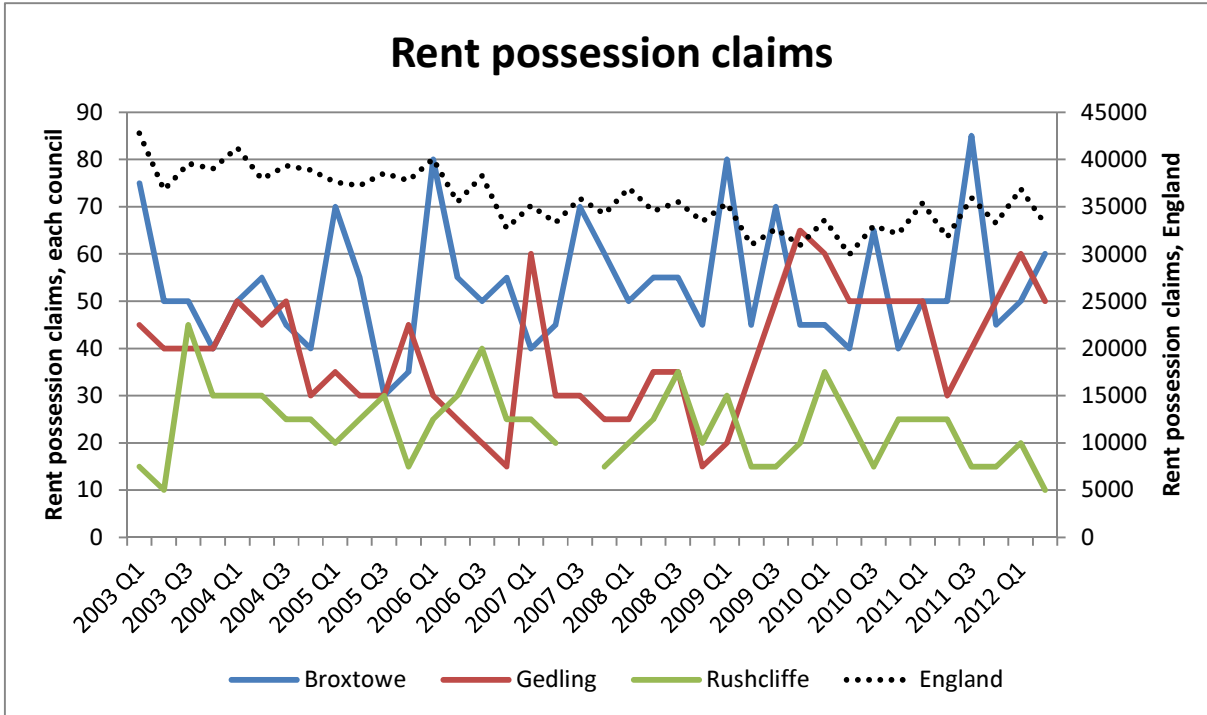
Levels of homeless applications due to loss of rented housing, and due to private sector rent arrears, have fluctuated over the past four years covered in the review, but remain at a low level, averaging one application per month to each of the three councils. Many more cases, however, are likely to be dealt with as successful homeless preventions.³⁴

In rented housing, there is anecdotal evidence of increasing pressure on household finances, rising rents and reductions in Local Housing Allowance rates meaning that fewer landlords may be willing to let to households claiming Housing Benefit. Further welfare reforms planned from 2013 onwards may also have an impact, particularly in that the housing costs element of the new Universal Credit will normally be paid to the tenant each month, and not to the landlord. However, these concerns have not yet been reflected in the levels of court possession claims by landlords. Despite wide variations from quarter to quarter, these have remained at a consistent level over the long term.

³² <http://blog.moneysavingexpert.com/2012/03/13/the-uks-mortgage-ticking-time-bomb/>

³³ [Council for Mortgage Lenders](#). Serious arrears defined as more than three months behind in payments.

³⁴ The reasons for approach in homeless prevention cases have only been recorded in a consistent and comparable format since January 2012, when the three councils adopted a shared homelessness recording software package.

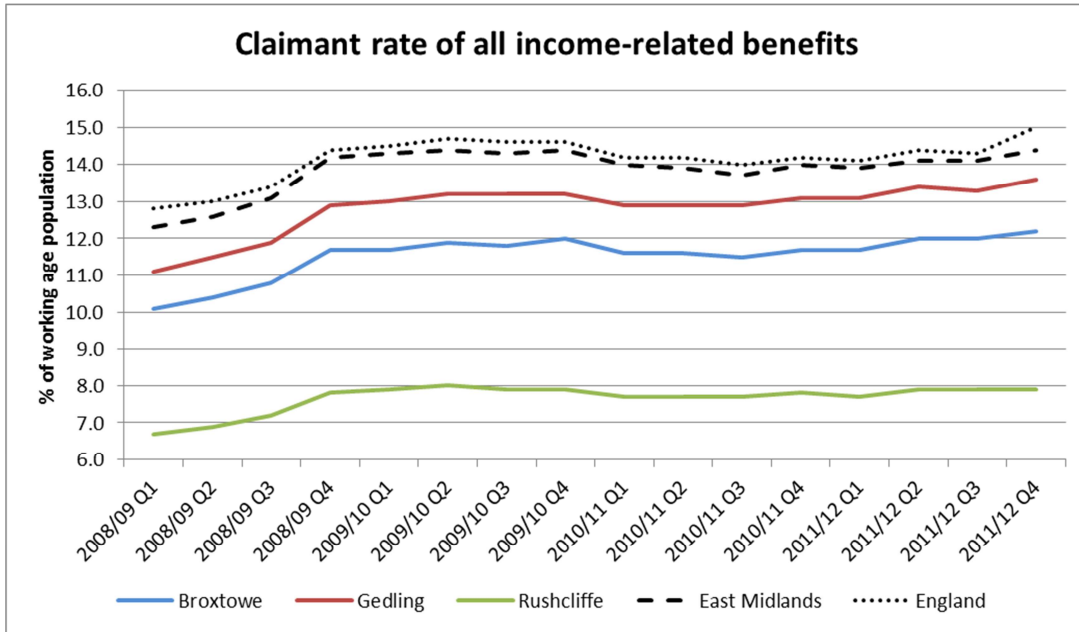


Source: Shelter Housing Databank

These figures, however, are only for cases where a landlord enters a possession claim to court. This is rarely needed in the private rented sector – when a landlord serves notice to end an assured shorthold tenancy, the tenant normally leaves without the need for court action. These stable figures therefore only represent a small number of those leaving rented housing.

A full assessment of the state of the local economy and the prospects for household income are beyond the scope of this review. However, some information is relevant to projecting the need for homelessness services. Household incomes are generally not growing, due to the impact of the recession and associated pay restraint. The number of people claiming income-related benefits in the area has increased by around 20% since 2008 and appears to still be rising slowly.³⁵

³⁵ Source for all benefit graphs *except* Housing Benefit claimants is Office for National Statistics local authority profiles at www.nomisweb.co.uk.

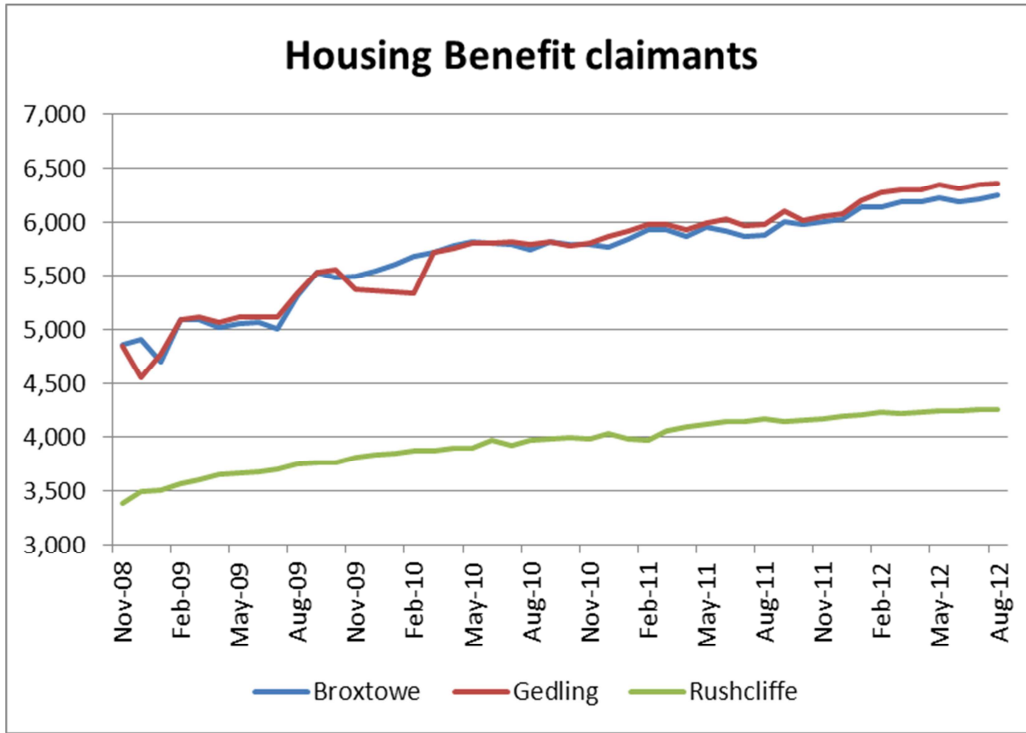


Housing Benefit is the most obvious indicator of potential future homelessness, as it shows where households have a shortfall between their income and the cost of their housing. The three authorities have all seen significant increases in the numbers of households claiming Housing Benefit over the course of the recession, which are in line with the national picture.³⁶ Much of the growth in the caseload has come from households who are in employment, but whose income is low enough that they still need assistance to afford the rent. This is particularly the case in Rushcliffe, where the proportion of the caseload in employment has more than doubled in less than four years. These households may be at particular risk from a deterioration in their financial circumstances that may mean they need to move to cheaper accommodation.

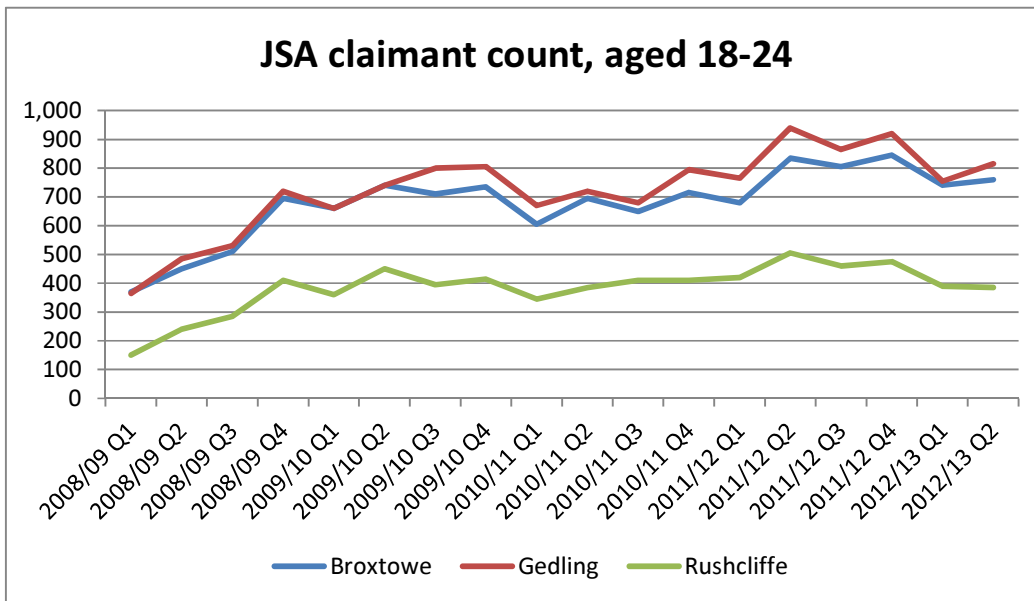
Proportion of Housing Benefit claimants in employment.

	Broxtowe	Gedling	Rushcliffe	Britain (not NI)
November 2008	8.02%	11.34%	8.85%	10.31%
August 2012	12.08%	17.77%	19.67%	18.40%

³⁶ Single Housing Benefit Extract, available via Department for Work and Pensions [Stat-Explore](#)

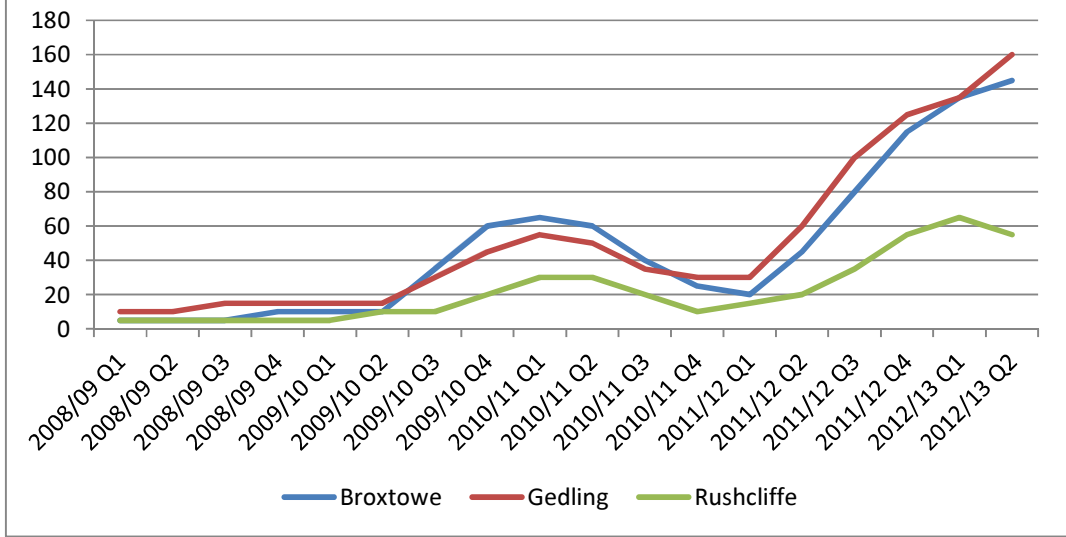


The number of young people claiming Job Seekers Allowance has declined from its peak in 2011, which is a welcome trend.



However, within this reduced number of young people claiming Job Seeker's Allowance are a much greater number of people who have claimed it continuously for 12 months or more. This is of considerable concern, as it may be these young people who are most at risk of homelessness due to rent arrears or relationship breakdown over money problems.

JSA claimant count, aged 18-24, claim over 1 year



Conclusion 5a1: housing costs are increasing faster than earnings, making housing less affordable

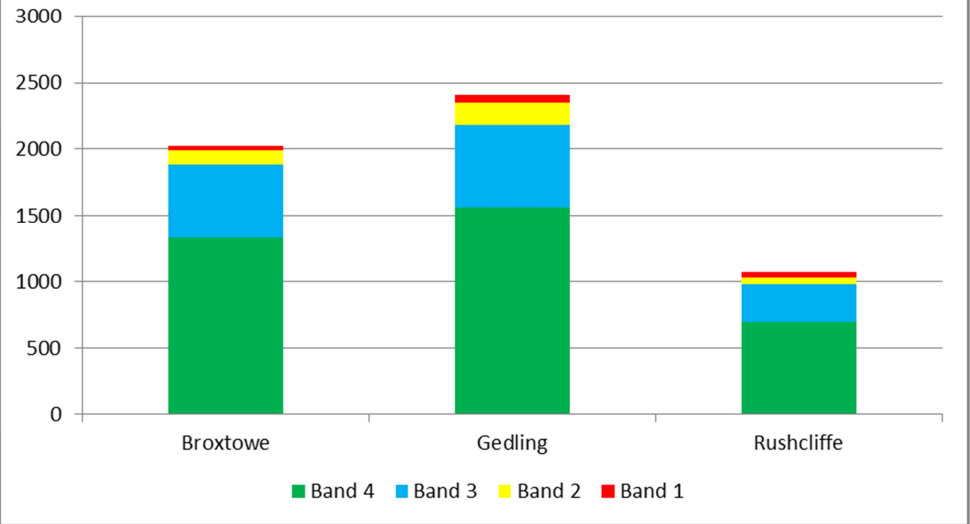
Conclusion 5a2: increased numbers of people claiming benefits may be at risk of homelessness

5b. Availability of social housing

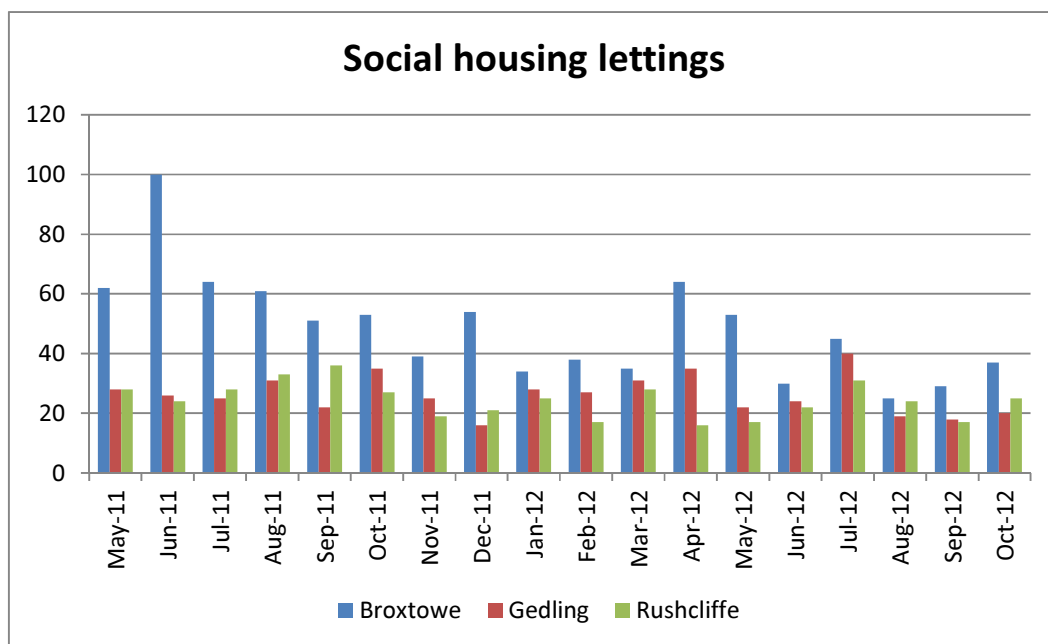
Social housing is the most affordable tenure, and usually³⁷ offers the benefit of secure or assured tenancies, which makes it very desirable. This means that demand for social housing greatly outstrips supply. The three councils have 5,500 applications on their housing register. At current rates of reletting social housing it would take over five years to rehouse all of them, assuming that properties that came up were a perfect match to the applicants and discounting new applicants.

³⁷ See "Relationship to other housing strategies" for discussion of tenure reform.

Housing Register applications, 22 Oct 2012



Source: internal figures from Homesearch



Conclusion 5b1: there will not be enough social housing for everyone who needs it, even in the long term

Clearly there is insufficient social housing to meet the needs of everyone who approaches the councils as potentially homeless, which is why other techniques such as homelessness prevention, supported accommodation and assisting people to find private rented housing are so important. It is possible the imbalance between supply and demand for social housing may become more acute if the impact of increased Right to Buy discounts³⁸ from 2012 onwards outstrips the development of new housing.

	Average social housing lettings per month ³⁹		Social housing stock ⁴⁰	Households on Housing Register ⁴¹
	All properties	General needs		
Broxtowe	49	38	5809	2025
Gedling	26	21	5056	2407
Rushcliffe	24	19	4027	1068

The vast majority of housing register applicants across the three boroughs are in the lowest priority band, which means that they are not at immediate risk of homelessness (which would place them in bands 2 or 3). However, band 4 includes people who may be adequately but insecurely housed, such as lodgers. It can be assumed that many of the people on the register do not have the financial resources to secure

Conclusion 5b2: the housing register has roughly equal proportions of single people and families, similar to homeless applicants (see section 2a)

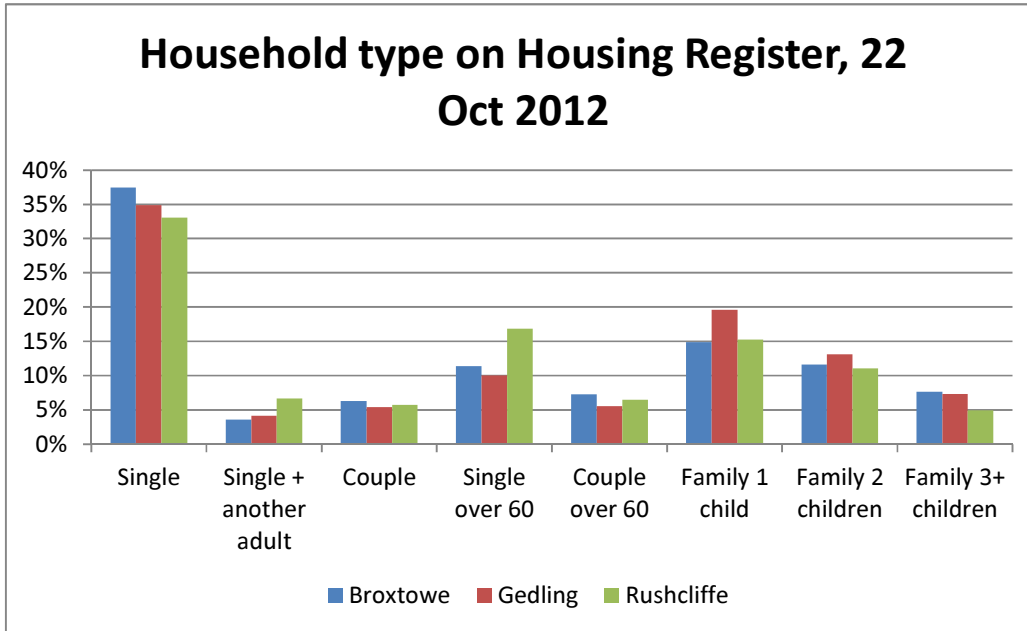
³⁸ All providers have anecdotally reported increased enquiries about Right to Buy, but no conclusive data is available yet on whether this will translate to increased sales.

³⁹ Data from Homesearch choice based lettings system for all months May 2011 to October 2012. "General needs" excludes all properties marked as sheltered housing, but many general needs properties will also have age restrictions etc.

⁴⁰ Homes & Communities Agency [Statistical Data Return](#) plus Broxtowe BC internal data. Correct as at 1 April 2012

⁴¹ Data from Homesearch, correct at 22 October 2012.

appropriate housing in the private market, so they would be at risk of homelessness if events (such as loss of income or relationship breakdown, for instance) forced them to leave their current accommodation. The composition of the housing register can therefore give us some clues about the nature of future homeless applications.



As can be seen, single people are the biggest group of people on the housing register but when all families with children are counted together, they approximately equal the proportion of single applicants (Broxtowe 35%, Gedling 40%, Rushcliffe 32%).

5c. Availability of private rented housing

Housing affordability has two main inputs – the cost of different housing in different areas, and the income and financial situation of the household that needs to pay for housing. There is a wealth of information on both separately, and in combinations of the two, such as the ratio of house prices to incomes. All councils have recently updated their Strategic Housing Market Assessments in relation to affordability,⁴² so this review provides only a brief analysis insofar as it is relevant to homelessness, to assess how easy or difficult it is for a person threatened with homelessness to find private rented accommodation (it is assumed that if a person is unable to rent, they are also unable to buy a home).

Despite much national commentary about rising rents, due to fewer people being able to get mortgages to buy a home and more affluent households therefore increasing demand within the rented sector, private rents appear to be flat, or rising very slowly, in the South Notts area,⁴³ which fits in with the regional picture of growth of 0.8% in the last year in the East Midlands.⁴⁴ However, that is not to say that rents are remaining affordable. Many working people on lower incomes will struggle to afford even a lower quartile⁴⁵ rent in the private sector without relying on Housing Benefit.

	Broxtowe	Gedling	Rushcliffe
1 bed lower quartile rent	£375 pcm	£350 pcm	£395 pcm
Net income needed ⁴⁶	£13,500	£12,600	£14,220
2 bed lower quartile rent	£450 pcm	£430 pcm	£515 pcm
Net income needed	£16,200	£15,480	£18,540
3 bed lower quartile rent	£525 pcm	£525 pcm	£595 pcm
Net income needed	£18,900	£18,900	£21,420
4 bed lower quartile rent	£695 pcm	£695 pcm	£850 pcm
Net income needed	£25,020	£25,020	£30,600

Conclusion 5c1: rents are at a level difficult for many people to afford, but do not seem to be rising locally

Couples may have two incomes, which clearly makes things more affordable, but they make up a small part of both the homelessness and housing register compared to single people. This, combined with the data we have on the young age of homeless applicants and the levels of youth

unemployment, suggests that schemes designed to help young single people share accommodation with each other could have a big impact.

For households who need to claim Housing Benefit, the maximum level of benefit payable for private rented housing is called the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), and is set at the 30th percentile of all rents in a Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA). It is usually possible to find 1 bedroom flats within the LHA rate,

⁴² Available at www.gedling.gov.uk/housing/housingstrategy/housingresearch.

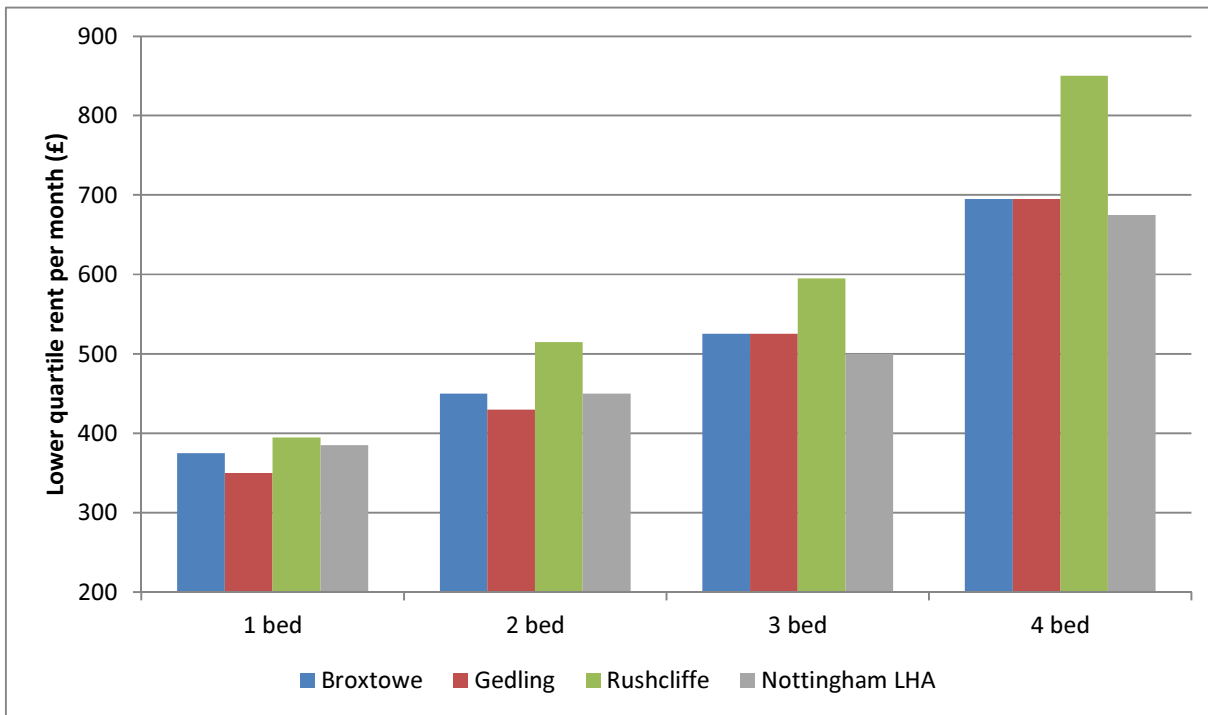
⁴³ Average rents available quarterly at local authority level from [Valuation Office Agency](http://www.valuationofficeagency.co.uk).

⁴⁴ Figures for 12 months to September 2012 from [LSL Property Services Buy to Let Index](http://www.lsl.co.uk). National average rise was 3.2%, but this includes considerable regional variation (London 6.2%, West Midlands 2.9%, Wales -1.4%, South West -1.5%).

⁴⁵ i.e. the lowest 25% of all available rental properties.

⁴⁶ Using principle that housing costs should take up no more than 1/3rd of net income – this would not be considered a comfortable standard of living.

and sometimes a small number of 2 bedroom properties. However, because Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe are relatively affluent parts of the Nottingham BRMA,⁴⁷ it will be seen that the LHA does not cover even the cheapest 25% of all available rents for larger properties.



There are two further barriers to Housing Benefit claimants finding affordable accommodation. Firstly, single claimants aged under 35 are entitled only to the Shared Accommodation Rate, which in Nottingham is £68 per week or £294.67 per month.⁴⁸ Secondly, it is still very common to see “Sorry, no DSS” printed in rental property adverts. A large but unquantified proportion of landlords, even at this cheaper end of the market, will not let property to Housing Benefit claimants. This can affect not just workless households, but also low-income working households who need to claim some Housing Benefit to “top up” the rent they can afford to pay. The number of working people claiming Housing Benefit has risen 86% in the last three years.⁴⁹ Even if a landlord accepts Housing Benefit claimants, they are likely to require references, a deposit, rent in advance and administration fees, which many homeless people are not in a position to provide.

Conclusion 5c2: finding a 1 or 2 bed private rented property is possible for some Housing Benefit claimants; finding anything larger is difficult for most

⁴⁷ Parts of Gedling fall within the North Nottingham BRMA and parts of Rushcliffe within the Leicester & surrounds and Grantham & Newark BRMAs. However, the vast majority of properties in all three boroughs fall within the Nottingham BRMA, which is used here for convenience of comparison.

⁴⁸ There are some exceptions, which include some ex-offenders and some cases where the claimant has spent time in a homeless hostel or is at risk of sleeping rough.

⁴⁹ National Housing Federation, [Home Truths 2012, England](#)

5d. Health factors

Physical and mental health are important factors that affect where a person is able to live, and the type of property they need. They are linked to several causes of homelessness: family and friends no longer being willing (or able) to accommodate a person; loss of rented housing; homelessness after leaving hospital (either acute care or long-term); and are likely to contribute to the large “Other reasons” category that makes up a fifth of homeless applications nationwide (see section 3). In particular, there is anecdotal evidence from all three authorities that a number of clients are presenting with complex mental health difficulties that makes it difficult to assist them into a suitable property where they will be able to sustain a tenancy.

Nottinghamshire County Council co-ordinated an audit of the health needs of single homeless people in autumn 2012, by asking each agency that sees homeless people to complete a questionnaire. This covered what health services they were registered with and had used, lifestyle issues such as smoking, diet and exercise, drug and alcohol use, blood-borne viruses and sexual health. Initial results are expected to be available in December 2012, prior to a report being presented to the County Health & Wellbeing Board. The results of the audit will be included in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Conclusion 5d: work is needed to evaluate the wealth of health-related data and improve joint working with housing

(JSNA) of adults’ health needs, which is used to plan the commissioning of new health services.⁵⁰ This is a welcome development, which will allow mainstream services to respond to the needs of clients, providing help at the point of homelessness and support in moving on from it.

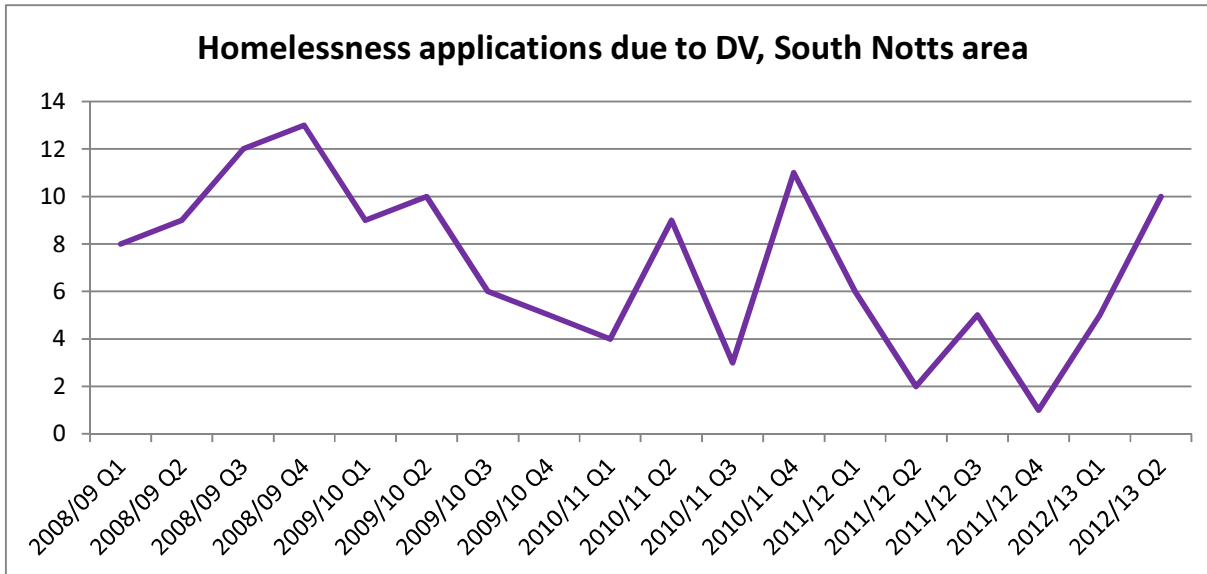
The JSNA includes many different data sets that allow health and wellbeing to be compared across different areas of the county. However, not all of the data relevant to homelessness is available in a time series, and this limits its usefulness in projecting levels of future need. Given the quantity of information available in the JSNA, however, and in other health-related resources such as NHS Local Health, further investigation is needed to identify the most relevant data and what it can tell us about the likely impact on homelessness.

5e. Domestic abuse

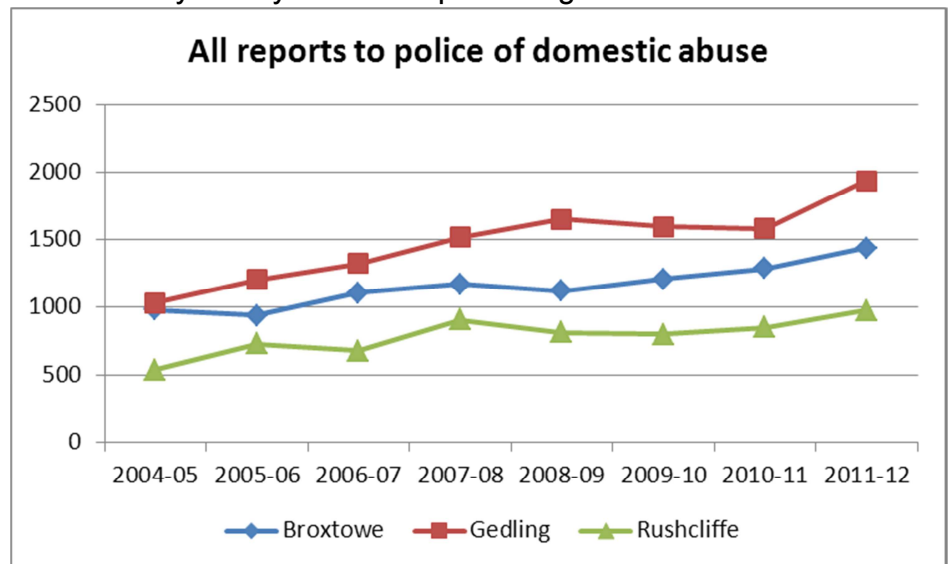
Domestic abuse is another significant cause of homelessness, and trends in this area may suggest whether homelessness is likely to rise or fall.

The numbers of homelessness applications over the review period due to domestic violence, from either a partner or another person, are too small for conclusions to be drawn for each individual council. Across the partnership area as a whole, there has been a notably decrease in levels of applications, which (in the context of overall levels discussed below) suggests that prevention methods such as support services are working to some extent. However, increased number of applications in the past six months show that domestic violence is still a significant factor.

⁵⁰ <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/jsna/>



A review produced for the South Notts Community Safety Partnership⁵¹ in August 2012 showed levels of recorded domestic abuse in the area increased significantly in 2011/12 after remaining roughly static for several years. Domestic incidents (which are reported to the police but no crime appears to have been committed) rose by 18% on the previous year. All the most common types of domestic crime increased to some extent (criminal damage, violence with and without injury), and, although less common than these types, domestic-tagged common assault more than doubled in South Notts from 232 crimes in 2010-11 to 481 in 2011-12.



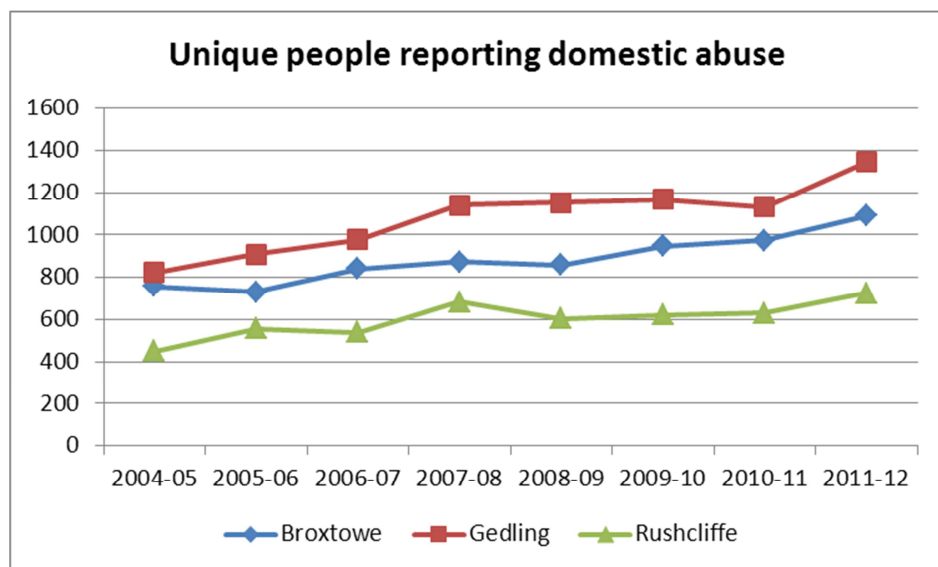
It is possible that some of the increase in reported domestic abuse is due to several factors that encourage victims to seek help:

- Less acceptance of domestic abuse, linked to wider coverage of publicity, work in schools, and local media campaigns such as Man Enough;⁵²
- More support being available for victims, such as Independent Domestic Violence Advisers supporting victims through the court process;

⁵¹ The partnership area covers Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe.

⁵² <http://www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk/manenoughwrc>

- More prosecutions for domestic offences and increased conviction rates for these prosecutions, along with innovations such as specialist domestic violence courts.⁵³



However, the number of unique victims reporting domestic abuse has also increased by more than 50% across the area since 2004 and, regardless of whether there is more domestic abuse, or simply fewer people suffering in silence, this has the potential to lead to more homeless applications unless preventative measures (such as Sanctuary installations) and support can stop homelessness being necessary.

The review also included anecdotal feedback from

agencies such as Broxtowe Women’s Project, Midlands Women’s Aid and Women’s Aid Integrated Services, who deliver services locally. There were general concerns from partners that the reduction in support provided due to cuts in the Nottinghamshire Supporting People budget⁵⁴ could lead to fewer preventions of homelessness due to domestic abuse, and therefore to more applications to local housing authorities.

Conclusion 5e: the increase in domestic abuse reports is likely to lead to increasing homeless presentations

6. Conclusions from desktop review of homelessness

How many people become homeless?

1a: The long-term decline in statutory homelessness has levelled off in the past three years

1b: We prevent much more homelessness than we accept, and we need to ensure this continues

1c: Large numbers of people are seeking housing advice from agencies other than the councils

1d: Numbers of people in temporary accommodation in Gedling and Rushcliffe have been rising

⁵³ There were 74,000 prosecutions for domestic offences in England in 2009/10 compared to 35,000 in 2004/05. Conviction rates rose from 49% in 2002 to 72% in 2009/10. There are now 143 specialist domestic violence courts in England. Figures from Crown Prosecution Service, reproduced by [South Notts Community Safety Partnership](#).

⁵⁴ In February 2011, Nottinghamshire County Council published its intention to reduce the allocation for domestic violence services within its Supporting People programme from £809,221 in 2010/11 to £456,420 by 2014/15.

1e: There are small numbers of rough sleepers, but the impact on health makes their situation urgent

Who becomes homeless?

2a: Roughly equal numbers of single people and families become homeless

2b: Homelessness largely affects young people; fewer people over 45 become homeless

2c1: Ethnic minority households are more likely to become homeless, but no one ethnic group in particular

2c2: The needs of Eastern European migrants and Gypsies and Travellers need to be kept under careful review

2d: Other than children and pregnancy, the most common priority needs are being 16/17, mental illness and physical disability

Why do people become homeless?

3a1: Parental eviction remains the most common cause of homelessness

3a2: Violence, rent/mortgage arrears and loss of rented housing are other significant causes

What changes are we likely to see in homelessness?

5a1: housing costs are increasing faster than earnings, making housing less affordable

5a2: increased numbers of people claiming benefits may be at risk of homelessness

5b1: there will not be enough social housing for everyone who needs it, even in the long term

5b2: the housing register has roughly equal proportions of single people and families, similar to homeless applicants (see section 2a)

5c1: rents are at a level difficult for many people to afford, but do not seem to be rising

5c2: finding a 1 or 2 bed private rented property is possible for some Housing Benefit claimants; finding anything larger is difficult for most

5d: work is needed to evaluate the wealth of health-related data and improve joint working with housing

5e: the increase in domestic abuse reports is likely to lead to increasing homeless presentations

7. Self-assessment of homelessness action plans

One essential element of the homelessness review is to look back at the action plans from each of the partner councils' last homelessness strategies, which were all published in 2008, and check which actions have been completed, which have been effective, whether any are still outstanding and where follow-up actions may be needed.

7a. Broxtowe Borough Council – 2008 Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

Objective 1 – Preventing homelessness by improving housing options and early intervention

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Achieved	Comments
Provision of a community based one stop shop for housing needs services, where clients can access the full range of services including CAB, debt advice, employment and training advice	Med.	Sep. 2008	Sep. 2010	Homeless Manager	Yes – One stop shop hub provided at Eastwood as part of trailblazer project. Also CAB moved into Council Offices at Beeston.	Police also due to move into Council Offices at Beeston in late 2012. Need to attract more employment services at Eastwood hub.
Improve co-ordination of debt services within the borough	High	Sep. 2008	Apr. 2009	Homeless Manager	Partly – more streamlined referral process to CAB for debt advice including fast-tracking.	Need to identify / source additional debt advice services.
Improve work with landlords and letting agents to improve access to the private rented sector for those threatened with homelessness	Med.	Jan. 2009	Dec.2009	First Lets Manager & Homeless Manager	No – this sort of work has taken a backseat as the First Lets project has now finished.	BBC looking to appoint a Private Sector development officer subject to cabinet approval.
Introduce a discharge protocol with the local hospital	Low	Jun. 2009	Jun. 2010	Homeless Manager	No – this work was part of a wider action of the East Midlands Strategy	There are very few presentations direct from hospital – is there enough

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Achieved	Comments
					sub-regional group however no inroads were made at the QMC	evidence of need to justify the work?
Introduce home visiting in all cases of eviction by family and friends	Med.	Jan. 2009	Dec.2009	Homeless Manager	Yes – all parental, relative and friend evictions have a home visit carried out	
Explore opportunities for increased prevention of homelessness in cases of eviction by family and friends. Explore best practice, and benchmark with other councils using the LA Prevention Survey published by CLG	Med.	Feb.20 09	Feb. 2010	Homeless manager	Yes – used examples of good practice including use of Nottingham Nighstop & mediation. Benchmark group with Erewash & Amber Valley.	Less acceptances from applicants evicted by family and friends
Introduce homelessness and health needs assessments in partnership with PCT	Med.	Sep. 2009	Sep. 2010	Homeless Health Team	Yes – this was achieved via our Trailblazer programme. Actions included joint training with health professionals, health visitor and GP referrals and improvements in TA.	We also now have strong health representation at the Inter-Agency Homeless Forum.
Continue to make education a tool for prevention and explore opportunities for preventing homelessness by educating people in schools & colleges , night shelters & prisons.	Med.	July 2008	On-going	BYH & Homeless Manager	Yes – achieved in partnership with BYH. All comprehensive schools in Broxtowe all colleges and supported accommodation.	BYH education work also rolled out into other LA areas including Erewash, Amber Valley, Gedling & Rushcliffe.

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Achieved	Comments
Develop a full range of customer leaflets on prevention	Low	Feb. 2009	Nov. 2009	Homeless Manager	Yes – Leaflets available for Homelessness, Housing Advice, Temporary Accommodation, General Needs Housing & Homeless Prevention.	Work also planned to update and add to information on the Broxtowe Website in late 2012.
Introduce customer feedback following a housing options interview, setting out clearly the expectations and responsibilities of each party (the council and the client)	Med.	June 2009	Jan. 2010	Homeless Manager	No – this has mainly been done as a snapshot every quarter and not every single appointment.	
Set prevention targets for staff in the Housing Solutions Team	Med.	Mar. 2009	Mar. 2009 & on-going	Homeless Manager	Yes – staff have targets for preventions monitored via 1-2-1s.	This has worked well and led to an increase in the number of preventions.
Improving use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP). Consider locating the DHP budget within housing solutions, or providing easy referral routes into it.	Med.	Nov. 2008	Nov. 2009	Homeless Manager	No – the spending of DHP has improved slightly but still not spending full amount.	This becomes a greater priority with the welfare reforms planned for 2013.
Review the procedures in place for court action notification with Housing Management to make these more robust.	High	Aug. 2008	Jan. 2009	Homeless Manager	Yes – Full procedures in place for Housing Options, Housing Management and rent recovery.	This has seen a reduction particularly in the numbers of evictions of BBC tenants.

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Achieved	Comments
Extend these arrangements, so they are also in place with RSLs					Protocol with RSLs achieved via East Midlands Forum	

Objective 2 – Helping people at the point of homelessness

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Achieved	Comments
Review options available to victims of domestic abuse and harassment. Explore best practice and work up solutions tailored for Broxtowe	Med.	Jan. 2009	Jan.2010	Domestic Violence Prevention Officer	Yes – options and procedures reviewed by DV Coordinator.	
Review floating support provision available for vulnerable groups, especially those with drug and alcohol issues and people affected by mental illness	High	July 2008	Jan.2009	SP	Yes – Specialist services commissioned for offenders, mental health and substance misuse via SP.	Specialist floating support now being replaced by generic service.
Conduct a full review of temporary accommodation	Med.	Oct. 2008	Jan. 2009	Temp. Accom. Officer	Yes – improvement programme implemented – Plowman Court refurbishment.	Potentially need to do another review but around the size configuration and suitability rather than accommodation standards.
Review provision of “licenses” for those moving from TA to permanent	Low	Jan. 2009	Jun. 2009		Yes – No NSTs now issued to those accepted as homeless.	

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Achieved	Comments
housing						
Examine levels of mortgage repossessions given the current economic climate and develop feasible interventions	Med.	July 2008	Jan. 2009	Homeless Manager	Yes – this work was superseded by mortgage repossession funding and mortgage rescue which offered options to those in mortgage difficulty.	

Objective 3 – Tackle the wider causes and symptoms of homelessness

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Achieved	Comments
Improve data capture on housing needs / homelessness across the full range of agencies in Broxtowe	Med.	Apr. 2009	Ongoing	Homeless Manager	Yes – CAB now reporting preventions, other data captured by probation, prison and BYH.	
Improve data capture within Housing Solutions to measure true access to services	Med.			Homeless Manager	Yes – new Abritas system improves data capture on P1E and preventions	
Reassess levels of rough sleeping in Broxtowe – conduct a rough sleepers survey	Low	Jun. 2009	Oct. 2009	Homeless Manager	No – it was decided to use Homeless Watch Survey and a questionnaire of agencies to estimate rough sleeping levels.	A count was deemed to be too expensive and time-consuming for the likely low numbers involved.
Develop a Young Persons Housing Strategy which looks specifically at the needs of young people and	Med.	Dec. 2009	July 2010	Homeless Manager	Yes – This was absorbed by both the Homeless Strategy and the Trailblazer Action Plan.	BYH helping deliver a comprehensive prevention package on behalf of BBC.

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Achieved	Comments
enables the Council to meet the CLG target of eliminating the use of B&B for 16/17 year olds by 2010						
Work with Private Sector Team to develop an Empty Homes Strategy that links to the Homelessness Strategy and impacts on tackling homelessness	Low			Principal E.H.O.	Yes – Empty Homes Strategy published 2010.	

Objective 4 – Support vulnerable people

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Achieved	Comments
Ensure the needs of homeless households are represented in the development of Choice Based Lettings	High	July 2008	July 2010	Homeless Manager	Yes – Needs of the homeless and those threatened with homelessness given band 2 and reasonable preference.	The banding priorities are tailored to encourage prevention.
Improve links with Social Services (Children Services)	Med.	July 2008	July 2008	Homeless Manager	Partly – continued to attend the Joint meeting (now the Youth Homeless Forum)	A new protocol is being developed and still operational issues when dealing with 16/17 year olds.
Implement the Move on Planned Protocol Assess its impact	Med.	July 2008	On-going	Homeless Manager	Yes – BBC Move-on protocol completed and agreed with supported accommodation projects.	Move-on arrangements

7b. Gedling Borough Council – 2008 Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

Priorities for action	Intended outcome	Completed?	Comments
Explore options for, and, if appropriate, progress the replacement of, Balmoral Hostel with 'fit for purpose' self-contained accommodation	The provision of high quality accommodation that is fit for purpose, and which contribute to the Council's priorities	Complete – modern temporary accommodation in place and Balmoral House disposed of.	Council keeping temporary accommodation under review and will procure further units from private sector if needed
Value For Money assessment of the 'toolkit' and other services for homeless people in the Borough	A calculation of the wider costs, overheads and support offered to homeless clients	Not complete.	Consider for carry-forward to 2013 – 2018 strategy.
Develop supported accommodation for teenage parents in partnership with Supporting People and Registered Social Landlord	The provision of supported accommodation suitable for teenage parents in the Borough	Complete – teenage parent service operated by Metropolitan is in place.	
Work with Housing Associations in the Borough to increase the availability of temporary accommodation	Increase the supply of temporary accommodation and the reduction in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation by the Borough Council	Complete – redevelopment of Killisick Court site by Derwent Living provided new temporary accommodation	
Work with other Departments of the Council to provide money management and welfare benefits advice.	Increase in the takeup of benefits, including Housing Benefit, preventing homelessness. Income maximisation.	Complete – Benefit Maximisation Officers now in post	Advice also available from CAB (drop-in at Civic Centre every Friday) and numerous agencies promoted through Enhanced Housing Options
Develop relationship with the Courts to receive early notification of evictions across all tenures	Prevent homelessness	Partly complete – this is mandatory for mortgage claims, and social housing is covered by pre-eviction protocol. Private rental	Follow-up needed to increase takeup of pre-eviction protocol among Registered Providers, aiming for 100% coverage

Priorities for action	Intended outcome	Completed?	Comments
		possession claims are rare.	
PACE training to train Officers to gather evidence to prosecute landlords who carry out illegal evictions		Not pursued.	Illegal evictions so rare that not considered a good use of resources.
Work with partners to implement Choice Based Lettings	CBL in operation	Complete – Homesearch launched March 2011	
Implement mediation services	Mediation services included in toolkit of options	Complete – all Housing Needs Officers trained in mediation, which is used on home visits	Follow-up action – review whether need for further training
Review the provision of Supporting People funded floating support within the Borough	Ensure appropriate support in place to assist with prevention of homelessness and tenancy sustainment	Complete – full review carried out by Nottinghamshire County Council in 2011/12 and new service commissioned	Follow-up action – procure and monitor Gedling support service to “top-up” Supporting People provision
Not to use B&B accommodation for 16/17 year olds after March 2010 unless in an emergency	Meet national agenda/target	Complete – only one 17 year old placed in B&B in 2012 due to emergency situation.	
Expanding the protocol for 16/17 year olds	More settled accommodation for 16/17 year olds	Complete – new, expanded protocol in place setting out responsibilities of each agency	Follow-up action – monitor effectiveness through Youth Homelessness Forum
Engaging with Education services to pro-actively prevent homelessness earlier and raise awareness of the issues faced by young people experiencing homelessness	Education on the reality of homelessness for young people, with early education on housing options	Complete – Broxtowe Youth Homelessness providing education sessions to all Year 11 pupils in the Borough	Follow-up action – continue youth education programme for lifetime of new strategy.
Comprehensive review of the number of applicants from diverse groups, ensuring their needs are being met by housing and homelessness services in the Borough	A service that checks it meets the needs of the community	Not complete – all diversity information is captured in new Abrisas homelessness system, but no analysis or consultation has been carried out.	Consider for carry forward to new strategy.

Priorities for action	Intended outcome	Completed?	Comments
Seek to identify suitable Bed and Breakfast accommodation in the Borough	Provide emergency accommodation that is in the Borough.	Complete – comprehensive review undertaken. There is no suitable B&B accommodation in Gedling.	The Council uses B&Bs in Nottingham, Ashfield and Mansfield, giving a range of possible places where a household could be accommodated.
Explore the housing options service to include information/ advice on employment, skills and training	Expanded housing options services, breaking the cycle of homelessness	Complete – Enhanced Housing Options software in place from January 2011.	Customers can complete an assessment online, or officers can use it with them in interviews to make a personal action plan for wider options.
Explore the feasibility and benefits of having a protocol between Council Departments where revenue recovery may result in homelessness	Homeless prevention	Complete – no protocol, but Local Taxation have comprehensive policy and procedure in place on revenue recovery	Policy includes liaison with Adult Services to check if customer vulnerable before pursuing committal or bankruptcy to recover debt
Explore the extent of overcrowding in the Borough	A full understanding of the extent of overcrowding in the Borough to informing future policy and partnership working	Not complete – not seen as a priority given limited resources.	Limited capacity to build new affordable homes to respond to any study findings.
Sustain low levels of households in temporary accommodation	Sustained high performance in relation to NI 156	Complete – levels of temporary accommodation use rising recently but still lower than in 2008 – see section 1d for details.	Council has statutory duty to accommodate a household that meets the criteria
Explore ways to improve access to the private sector to households with 'poor' housing histories	Extend the housing options for people with poor tenancy histories	In progress – consultation with landlords forum done and deposit guarantee scheme used routinely	Council is exploring whether to act as guarantor of rent, but more for young people with no housing history than for those with poor histories.
Contribute to regional priorities for action	Ensure the regional agenda is progressed	No longer relevant – regional government abolished 2011	Council continues to progress joint working with local partners, and is in touch with regional issues through

Priorities for action	Intended outcome	Completed?	Comments
			membership of East Midlands Councils.

7c. Rushcliffe Borough Council – 2008 Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

	What We Want	Action	Complete	Comments
1.1	To prevent homelessness through early intervention in debt problems	1.1.1 Development of an early warning scheme for households at risk of eviction with RSLs	Pre-eviction protocol completed 2011 requiring early notice to be given to LA.	Need to push for wider take up by RPs
		1.1.2 Provision of emergency debt/money advice	Yes, available through Rushcliffe Advice Network (RAN) and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).	New outreach service (6hrs per week) to operate from Rushcliffe Community Contact Centre (RCCC) in 2013. Training of customer services advisors in low level debt advice.
		1.1.3 The development of a credit union in Cotgrave	Yes – completed in 2009	Need greater involvement with credit unions to assist customers with budget management to reduce impact of welfare reforms
		1.1.4 Specialist debt and mortgage repossession training for Housing Options advisors	Completed in 2012. Officers trained in debt advice and mortgage repossession training (Mortgage Rescue Scheme).	Further training to be undertaken with CAB outreach advice worker during 2013.
1.2	Wider access to homelessness prevention services	1.2.1 Taking prevention services into the community. Enabling other agencies to offer our services to increase access	Yes. Increased access with floating support providers, advice agencies, CAB, Shelter, RCVS and British Legion. Cotgrave Credit Union (CCU) advising on Rentstart. RAN established in 2009, consisting of 3 advice centres in Cotgrave, Radcliffe On Trent and West Bridgford, including greater links with Royal British Legion.	
		1.2.2 Establishing further outreach and drop-in provision throughout the	In progress - new outreach service (6hrs per week) via CAB to operate from RCCC in 2013	Consider housing advice outreach drop in sessions at The Friary once a month.

	What We Want	Action	Complete	Comments
		Borough		
		1.2.3. More information on services available in a variety of formats	Completed, translation services promoted and available on request.	
		1.2.4. Ensure that services are planned and improved to reflect the diversity of the community to maximise ethnic minority access to prevention services	Regular monitoring of diversity undertaken on a quarterly basis. Local presentations reflect the national picture of ethnic groups being over-represented. Equality Impact Assessments undertaken for key strategic, policy and procedural documents to ensure no adverse impacts arise.	Consider carrying out more locally based research on housing needs – last study 2004.
1.3	More preventions from other sources	1.3.1 Identifying and providing training to other agencies and council departments that contribute to the prevention agenda	Ongoing, training provided to Rushcliffe CVS, Housing Choices, Contact Centre Staff, Revenues & Benefits	
		1.3.2 Reviewing referral arrangements/protocols and setting targets with these agencies	Debt advice referral protocol agreed with advice agencies for MRS, move on protocol with supported Housing Providers i.e. Framework and Cedar House.	16- 17 years and care leaver protocol to be completed, currently in draft. Require hospital discharge protocol.
1.4	A reduction in the number of homeless 16/17 year olds	1.4.1. A successful mediation service for young people	Officers provide basic mediation between estranged parties to enable a safe return home	Under 21s get mediation through Targeted Support
		1.4.2. Education for young people about the reality of becoming homeless	Broxtowe Youth Homelessness delivers 63 educational and 35 peer educator sessions to 8 secondary schools in the Borough. Rushcliffe Directory and 'On Your Feet' magazine distributed to all young people who attend the sessions.	Needs to be repeated as an annual programme

	What We Want	Action	Complete	Comments
		1.4.3.A multi-agency response to individual cases of homelessness	Completed. Nottinghamshire Youth Homelessness Forum established	
		1.4.4.Reviewing and updating protocols with Children and Young peoples services	16-17 year old protocol completed.	Consultation underway on new protocol via Targeted Solutions which strengthens the roles and responsibilities of partner agencies.
		1.4.5. Develop other accommodation sources such as supported lodgings, crash pad model, Nightstop	Completed – Elizabeth House, supported lodgings (host families) and Nightstop available.	
2.1	An end to rough sleeping	2.1.1. A rough sleepers count should be held to quantify the true extent of the issue	Street Outreach Team has confirmed that there are currently only 4 rough sleepers in the 3 boroughs of Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe which does not warrant a count	Keep under review
		2.1.2. Taking options to rough sleepers – providing services at places that rough sleepers use	Framework Street Outreach project commenced June 2012	Outreach advice drop-in sessions to be held at The Friary on a monthly basis.
		2.1.3. Reconnection services for Rough Sleepers from other areas	Reconnection services explored as part of Street Outreach Team	
2.2	Good quality temporary accommodation	2.2.1 Work towards achieving Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework Level B in all core objectives at the Councils temporary accommodation	Validation visit undertaken and Level B achieved.	Supporting People funding withdrawn, however, QAF used as best practice framework.

	What We Want	Action	Complete	Comments
		2.2.2. Service users to be consulted on the quality of the accommodation provided and service gaps	Ongoing. Consultation undertaken as part of resident involvement plans. Customer satisfaction surveys issued and evaluated.	
		2.2.3. Promote the adoption of the “move-on protocol” between RSLs and supported housing providers	Completed. Promoted via Joint Inter-agency Forum and short term services group	
2.3	An end to B+B use for all	The provision of a variety of quick access accommodation options	Completed. Elizabeth House, Cedar House, Nightstop and Supported Lodgings available.	Continue to explore immediate access accommodation for all groups.
3.1	Access to education, training and employment	3.1.1. Access to work, education and training advice in supported housing	Implementation of Enhanced Housing Options module	Enhanced Housing Options module available for all Homesearch and homeless applicants which signposts to education and employment – need to ensure providers and Temp Accommodation Officer working with clients to use regularly
		3.1.2 Referral to Connexions after homeless interview for all young people	Implementation of Enhanced Housing Options module	Explore links to Futures (new Connexions) on Enhanced Housing Options Module
		3.1.3 Access to work, education and training information through the “kiosk” at Civic Centre and other remote locations	Implementation of Enhanced Housing Options module	Enhanced Housing Options module available for all Homesearch applicants which signposts to education and employment – need to ensure officers and RCCC staff using with clients regularly
3.2	Access to health services	3.2.1 Provision of Surestart services for service users at Hound and Rushcliffe Lodge	Surestart services underway and completed	

	What We Want	Action	Complete	Comments
		3.2.2 Expand the referral of households with school age children to health visitor and school nurse liaison services to include all homeless households	Health visitors - completed	Health Visitor visits all homeless clients in temporary accommodation regularly
4.1	Fewer parental exclusions	4.1.1 Home visits for all parental and other exclusions	Home visits completed	
		4.1.2 Development of family mediation services	Officers provide basic mediation between estranged parties to enable a safe return home	Under 22s get mediation through Targeted Support
4.2	Reduction in number of women homeless due to domestic violence	4.2.1 Continued support for the Sanctuary scheme	Sanctuary presented as an option for all clients within the Borough suffering DV	
		4.2.2. Commitment to the setting up and implementation of the County MARAC	County MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) completed	Dedicated officer attends MARAC and acts as local lead
4.3	Remove the financial barriers to housing options	4.3.1 Expansion of the Rentstart and First Lets schemes to include households who are working + further incentives to landlords	Homeless Prevention Fund used to promote Landlord incentives, including 'Golden Hello' to encourage private landlords	First Lets Scheme merged with Choice Based Lettings
		4.3.2 Promotion to prospective tenants and landlords of LHA and DHP	Ongoing – officers promote both during options interviews and close joint working with Housing Benefits to ensure delays avoided wherever possible	
4.4	Tackle the threat of increased mortgage reposessions	4.4.1 Specialist training for Housing Options Team advisors and other advice agencies	Officers have attended seminars on MRS scheme and specialist training	Last year of scheme. Officers have had some successes with MRS and have established close working relationship with local agent.

8. Mapping current service provision

This is not a comprehensive directory of all services available to people living in South Nottinghamshire. In particular, a wide variety of other services are available to support people with debt and financial problems, mental illness, physical or learning disabilities, or substance misuse problems. The only services listed here are those that are locally provided (i.e. not national helplines or websites) and judged as being directly relevant to homelessness

8a. Information and advice

Service	Description	Usage level	Restrictions/criteria
Enhanced Housing Options	Website-based “wizard” that helps customers find housing options that are suitable for them based on their answers	Used by 2,156 customers (Jan 2011 – Nov 2012)	Web access needed, but can be completed with officers
Citizens Advice Broxtowe	Permanent bases in Beeston and Eastwood. Drop ins also provided at Bramcote and Stapleford GP surgeries.		Open access
Citizens Advice in Gedling	Drop-in sessions at Calverton (Monday), Bestwood Village (Monday), Netherfield (Thursday), Arnold (Friday)		Open access
Rushcliffe Advice Network	Weekly advice surgeries provided in West Bridgford, Cotgrave and Radcliffe on Trent, and at The Friary	548 clients advised on housing matters (Jul 2011 – Jul 2012)	Open access
Nottingham & District Citizens Advice Bureau	Full time bureau, based in city centre		Open access
Notts Housing Advice Service	Specialist housing advice by phone and at city centre offices	145 clients from South Notts assisted (2011/12)	Open access
Age UK Nottinghamshire Information & Advice Service	Tailored to needs of older people. Drop-in Monday AM, by appointment Thursday AM, home visits possible by arrangement.		Open access for older people
Broxtowe Youth Homelessness schools education work	Sessions for year 11 classes – raising awareness of what services are really available if moving out from parent’s home – delivered by peer educators with	3,257 pupils reached in 2011/12 academic year	Now provided yearly to all secondary schools in South Notts area

Service	Description	Usage level	Restrictions/criteria
	experience of being homeless		
Base 51	Information and advice service for young people focussed on holistic health and wellbeing of young people, including those going through family breakdown, homelessness, pregnancy etc.	Over 1,500 young people supported, with 7,953 visits to the centre (2010/11)	People aged up to 25. Open access – based in City Centre.

8b. Preventing homelessness

Service	Description	Usage level	Restrictions/criteria
Homelessness prevention floating support service (Framework)	Funded by Nottinghamshire County Council to work with anyone at risk of homelessness or recently homeless, and helping them to sustain their home	New service launched 2012	
Broxtowe BC Housing Options	Council service using full range of tools to prevent clients becoming homeless.	1410 (2011/12)	Open access
Gedling BC Housing Options	Council service using full range of tools to prevent clients becoming homeless.	1931 (2011/12)	Open access
Rushcliffe BC Housing Options	Council service using full range of tools to prevent clients becoming homeless.	940 (projected 12/13)	Open access
Rushcliffe BC Domestic Violence Outreach	Outreach, advocacy and support to help survivors of DV stay in their home where appropriate and safe to do so.	Average 6 families supported at a time, plus regular drop-in sessions	Self-referral to RBC or referral from agencies
Age UK Notts support services	Include Home Support Service, Visiting Service, Carers' Support and practical assistance to remain in the home		Self-referral or by referral from agencies
Base 51	In addition to general advice, provide housing support, help with budgeting, bills, benefit claims and help to set up new home, access furniture projects etc.		People aged up to 25. Open access – based in City Centre.
Nottinghamshire Runaways	Home support and phone helpline for		Referral by NCC

Service	Description	Usage level	Restrictions/criteria
(Catch 22)	young people who have returned home after running away, aimed at preventing homelessness by family breakdown		Targeted Support team
Mental health support service (HLG)	Emotional and practical support, advocacy, help to access accommodation	0.5 FTE worker. 21 new cases taken on 2011/12. 22 new cases taken on 2012/13 to date.	Accessed through drop-ins sessions at Hope Café (monthly), the Friary (weekly) and Elizabeth House (fortnightly)
Moving Forward (Framework)	Support service for people with mental health problems. Very little accommodation in South Notts, so mostly floating support.		Referrals from Community Mental Health Teams.
John Storer Clinic (Nottinghamshire Healthcare)	City centre outpatient community base for anyone with a drug problem		Self-referral or by referral from agencies
Oxford Corner (Nottinghamshire Healthcare)	City centre based individual treatment for people with moderate to severe alcohol misuse problems		Referral from statutory or voluntary agency
Double Impact	Offer courses and group sessions helping people recover from substance misuse and connect with employment, education and training provision		Self-referral or by referral from agencies
Nottingham Credit Union	Offer rent account to ensure direct payment of Housing Benefit to landlord, increasing chances landlord may accept benefit claimant as a tenant		Self-referral. Cost to set up account and/or per transaction.
Working Links support service	One year voluntary support programme based on action plan tailored to what an individual needs to get them into work, whether this is health assessments, transport, parenting classes etc.	New service – has capacity to support 10,000 people across East Midlands region	At least one member of household must be on job-seeking benefit, but excludes those on Work Programme

8c. Accommodation providers

Service	Description	Capacity	Referral criteria
Cedar House, Broxtowe (Cedar Housing)	Residential centre with 24 hour staff cover, training and education for young women at risk of homelessness	10 rooms	Women aged 16 – 25. Referrals from BBC, GBC, RBC
Stepping Stones, Eastwood (asra Housing Group)	Accommodation for single homeless people, with support and training in tenancy and life skills, e.g. cooking, budgeting etc.	12 rooms	Clients aged 16 – 25. Referrals through Targeted Support
Nottingham NightStop (58i)	Emergency overnight accommodation provided by volunteer host families for young people at risk of immediate homelessness, run by charity 58i.	68 young people assisted in 2010	Clients aged 16 – 25. Referral from councils and a wide range of other agencies.
Supported Lodgings (Stonham)	Young people are matched up with paid host families for up to 2 years, with full support provided by Stonham		Self-referral or referral from a wide range of agencies
Broxtowe BC temporary accommodation, Beeston, Stapleford, Eastwood	Various properties owned by Broxtowe BC for use as temporary accommodation	1 x 3 bed house 2 x 3 bed houses 11 x 1 bed flats	Homeless application to council required
Gedling BC temporary accommodation, Daybrook, Arnold, Carlton, Gedling	Various properties owned or leased by Gedling BC for use as temporary accommodation	12 x 2 bed flats 2 x 3 bed houses	Homeless application to council required
Rushcliffe BC temporary accommodation, West Bridgford	Two council-run hostels for families – kitchens/living areas shared between each pair of rooms at Hound Lodge.	Hound Lodge – 8 pairs of rooms Rushcliffe Lodge – 4 self-contained flats	Homeless application to council required
Elizabeth House, Daybrook (Framework)	Purpose-built quick access accommodation for single homeless people, with 24 hour staff presence and full support, training and resettlement package, drop in from GP and HLG Mental Health Service etc. Max stay of 3 months expected before move-on.	21 flats 7 flats available to each authority.	Referrals from BBC, GBC, RBC or through Targeted Support if client aged 16 – 21.

Service	Description	Capacity	Referral criteria
Broxtowe Move-on, Beeston (Framework)	Second stage accommodation between Elizabeth House and independent home –support and life skills training provided but less intensive than Elizabeth House.	12 flats	People moving on from Elizabeth House only
Gedling Move-on, Daybrook (Framework)	Second stage accommodation between Elizabeth House and independent home –support and life skills training provided but less intensive than Elizabeth House.	8 flats	People moving on from Elizabeth House only
Rushcliffe Move-on, West Bridgford (Framework)	Second stage accommodation between Elizabeth House and independent home –support and life skills training provided but less intensive than Elizabeth House.	4 flats	People moving on from Elizabeth House only
Solutions service (Framework)	Accommodation linked to support for single people and couples who want to address alcohol and substance misuse		Self-referral to Framework Central Access Point or via a wide range of agencies
Target service (Framework)	Accommodation linked to support for single people and couples with background of offending or involvement in criminal justice system		Self-referral to Framework Central Access Point or via a wide range of agencies
Teenage parent service, Arnold (Metropolitan)	Accommodation for up to 2 years and up to 5 hours support per week, provided on site or in another location	6 flats	Women aged 16 – 19. Self-referral or through agencies
Nottinghamshire YMCA, Mansfield	Hostel providing accommodation to single young people		Clients aged 16 – 25. Direct access, but must be in education or training.
South Notts women’s refuge (Midlands Women’s Aid)	Domestic violence refuge for women and families	9 units	Referral from other agencies, including councils
Dispersed supported houses (Women’s Aid Integrated Services)	Shared houses with intensive support for women and families leaving domestic violence	4 houses across Ashfield and South Notts	Referral from other agencies, including councils

8d. Services for homeless people

Service	Description	Usage level	Restrictions/criteria
The Friary	West Bridgford centre providing welfare and practical advice, shower, laundry, food parcels, clothing, bedding, drop-in from GP and Homeless Health Team, café, hairdressing, day centre, social activities, tenancy support		Open access – drop-in basis. Used by people from across Nottingham area.
Hope Café (Hope Nottingham)	Beeston centre providing housing/debt advice, café and food bank, GP, drug/alcohol services and fellowship		Open access – drop-in basis
The Arches (Trent Vineyard)	City-based project, providing hospitality, food, clothing, household goods, furniture, children and baby's toys and equipment etc.		Written referral letter from any supporting agency.
Emmanuel House	City centre project providing housing/debt advice, meals, showers, hairdressing, laundry, clothing. drug/alcohol services, drop-in from Homeless Health Team.		Open access – drop-in basis
Base 51	In addition to general and prevention work, provide showers and laundry for homeless and insecurely housed young people		People aged up to 25. Open access – based in City Centre.
Street outreach service (Framework)	Works under No Second Night Out principles to assess rough sleepers and connect them to services and housing	39 rough sleepers reported June – September 2012	Now operates across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Elizabeth House (Framework)	GP & drug counselling services made available to residents on-site		Elizabeth House residents
Health visitor outreach (Nottinghamshire Healthcare)	Provided for families with children staying in Rushcliffe BC temporary accommodation		Residents in Rushcliffe BC accommodation
Sure Start outreach	Outreach service provided at Hound Lodge hostel for families with children –		Residents in Rushcliffe BC accommodation

Service	Description	Usage level	Restrictions/criteria
	advice on child and family health, parenting, money, training and employment.		
Nottingham Nightstop (58i)	Volunteer mentoring and befriending services to provide a stable, supportive relationship for young people in chaotic situations.		Referral as for Nottingham Nightstop.
Furniture Reuse Network	Numerous local projects providing second hand furniture at low or no cost, including Haven Housing Trust, Family First, Broxtowe Furniture Scheme etc.		Criteria vary
The Health Shop (Nottinghamshire Healthcare)	Base for City Homeless Health Team. City centre shop providing sexual health and substance misuse services		Open access – drop-in basis
Education, Volunteering & Employment (EVE) services (Framework)	Painting & decorating course – 4 week course that leads on to Paint It – painting & decorating social enterprise Do It Yourself – 4 week carpentry and DIY course Fix It Estate Management – social enterprise carrying out cyclical maintenance, grounds maintenance and health and safety works Bike Club – social enterprise providing skills and experience in repairing and recycling bicycles Bitesize – social enterprise providing skills and experience in catering Helping Hands – personalised support to help people with mental health problems to manage them at work, access training, write a CV, apply for jobs etc. Gateway to Nature – helps people to get		Criteria vary – details on Framework website. Access to all via Framework Central Access Point.

Service	Description	Usage level	Restrictions/criteria
	<p>out and enjoy green and natural spaces, by organising trips, transport, gardening activities, support to overcome isolation etc.</p> <p>The Music Exchange – social enterprise providing skills and experience in music and retail shop work</p>		

9. Assessment of services

This section presents the feedback from the homelessness strategy consultation event held in October 2012. Participants were asked to move around a number of tables, each with a discussion on a particular topic, and to record their feedback on Post-It notes. These notes have been transcribed and form the basis of this assessment.

9a. Homelessness and health

This topic was chosen because health outcomes for homeless people are much worse than those for the general population,⁵⁵ and one of the themes covered in *Making Every Contact Count* is to improve health and reduce health inequalities for homeless people.

What works well at the moment?

There is extensive provision of health services being taken to homeless people in locations that they use, such as day centres, drop-in centres and supported accommodation, rather than relying on people to go to their doctor. This was widely seen as positive in helping people get the help they need. NHS walk in centres, and particularly the Health Shop in Nottingham city centre were seen as very accessible for homeless people, as they can be assessed and treated without the need to be registered with a local GP. A new duty has been created for GPs to offer services to everyone in their area, including homeless people. Several services were singled out for praise, including easy access to teenage pregnancy services and health visitors, who are seen as vital for child safeguarding when working with homeless families. As part of the new Health & Wellbeing Board arrangements, Nottinghamshire County Council are carrying out a survey of the health needs of homeless people in autumn 2012. The results of this will feed into the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and form evidence for the commissioning of new services. This evidence of understanding the impact of homelessness on long-term health and health service demand was widely welcomed.

What are the problems we need to tackle?

Lack of settled accommodation is strongly linked to poor health, both physical and mental, and people with poor health are less likely to recover if they cannot be adequately housed.⁵⁶ There is a particular gap in the lack of supported housing for medium to high risk clients with mental health problems, so if these people present as homeless, there is nowhere for the councils to refer them. Some have to be placed in bed & breakfasts, which is less than ideal and could lead to further health deterioration. Several participants also said that they did not know where to refer homeless people who needed health services, so better information was needed on what was available.

How we can improve things?

⁵⁵ Crisis, [Homelessness: a Silent Killer](#), 2011

⁵⁶ Crisis/Public Health Resource Unit, [Mental Ill Health in the Adult Single Homeless Population](#), 2009

Much of the feedback suggested various combinations of “one stop shops” or co-locating services, which is already happening to some extent. One specific suggestion was to locate mental health and drug/alcohol support workers in drop-in centres at least once a week (this assumes those support services exist and have the capacity to do this). There were also suggestions for staff training to educate people about mental illness and personality disorders, teenage mental health (in partnership with the Children & Adolescent Mental Health Service) and substance misuse.

9b. Youth homelessness

What works well at the moment?

Many people considered that there was a comprehensive range of services for young people who become homeless at the moment, with supported housing at Cedar House, the teenage parent scheme, Elizabeth House and the supported lodgings scheme, emergency accommodation through Nottingham NightStop and floating support available from Framework. The peer education sessions carried out by Broxtowe Youth Homelessness in local schools were also widely praised, as were the food parcels and home starter packs they provide, and the tenancy training packs provided by the teenage parents scheme. There was also feedback that partnership working around young homeless people is improving, with the establishment of a new Nottinghamshire Youth Homelessness Forum to ensure services are joined up, and revisions being agreed to the 16/17 year old homelessness protocol between Nottinghamshire County Council Children’s Services and the district authorities, which is essentially in avoiding young people being passed between the two.

What are the problems we need to tackle?

Although there is a broad range of provision, the feedback was that there is not enough capacity (“not enough hostels”, “not enough hostels for people with mental health problems”, “not enough workers to offer tenancy support”, “not enough young mums’ units” etc.) In the current financial situation, there is little the councils can do to address this in the short term, but it is important to capture this feedback for the long term. One consistent message was that young people leaving supported accommodation can be rushed into their own tenancy before the support is in place to help them sustain it, due to the urgent need to free up the supported accommodation. This is not a saving if the young person’s tenancy then fails and they need to go back to the supported accommodation. Another suggestion was that the prevention work in schools should be targeted to access vulnerable groups, for example, at pupil referral units.

How we can improve things?

Mediation between young people and family members who are asking them to leave was suggested by several participants. This is available at present, but it is a matter of making it more routine and improving take-up. Pre-tenancy and transitional support for when people move from supported accommodation into their own home needs to be strengthened to avoid the problems described above, and a balance must be found between moving clients on promptly and not moving them when they are not ready and likely to fail. Another suggestion was that the local

authority should act as a guarantor for 16 and 17 year olds, increasing the chances of them finding a social or private tenancy, and thus creating more capacity in the supported accommodation. Finally, it was suggested that home visits should be carried out as routine when a young person presents as homeless, as many issues can be resolved at this stage without the need to accept the young person for rehousing.

9c. Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is still a significant, and potentially rising, cause of homelessness (see section 5e) and is a principal concern for a number of partners in the Interagency Homelessness Forum.

What works well at the moment?

Awareness of domestic abuse has risen in recent years, and the message that survivors should not have to tolerate it is pushed consistently. Services are now easier and more discreet to access, with innovations such as putting contact details in public toilets and on sticks of lip balm. Services are promoted in council offices, police stations, GP surgeries, Sure Start centres and other public areas, and the issue is given high profile in media campaigns such as Man Enough.

There is now wider awareness that domestic abuse can affect men as well as women, with services able to refer to male refuges (although not local ones) via national Women's Aid, and a male Independent Domestic Violence Advisor working in the County.

The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) has become more embedded and effective, with better participation from agencies, and there was general praise for the Sanctuary scheme, whereby security can be installed in a survivor's home to help them feel more secure.

What are the problems we need to tackle?

There were fears for the future of some refuge services due to funding cuts, and it was noted that there is no longer a dedicated domestic abuse post for Gedling to co-ordinate services and initiatives.

It was also pointed out that many people who suffer domestic abuse may become homeless, but not as a direct result of it, and that without that "tag" they are not always referred to the specialist services and support that they need. Several participants raised additional dimensions to domestic abuse that are not always considered, including violence from older people with dementia to partners, violence from adults to elderly parents and domestic abuse as manifested among minority ethnic communities, such as forced marriage or honour-based violence.

How we can improve things?

Participants called for more education in schools on healthy relationships, and more awareness of domestic abuse between same sex couples, with a particular need for male refuges and support services (although it was noted that, in the past, some male refuges have not had enough demand

to remain open). There was a suggestion to offer survivors financial assistance to move quickly into the private sector, rather than waiting for a social housing property, and a recommendation that the sector should press for domestic violence prevention orders to be rolled out to Nottinghamshire as soon as possible.

9d. Accessing private rented housing

This remains a priority given the shortage of social housing, and the introduction of the power to discharge the homelessness duty into the private rented sector. The Government is keen for all local authorities to develop a suitable private sector offer for all client groups which will include giving both landlords and clients advice and support.

What works well at the moment?

Historically the three boroughs had a successful joint bid to the Homelessness Innovation Fund to run the First Lets project. The key strands of this project included:

- The co-ordination of common rent-in-advance/deposit guarantee schemes building upon existing schemes.
- The co-ordinated promotion of the development of existing student landlord accreditation schemes into a broader scheme to cover the whole of the private rented sector
- The co-ordinated set-up of tenant credit referencing through the Brushling service
- The co-ordinated development of a tenant accreditation scheme
- The development of a three Borough web-based property lettings shop for landlords

This was a very similar model to that which CLG are currently promoting and it was generally agreed that this model worked well. Although First Lets officially came to an end in 2011, all boroughs still actively promote the private-rented sector as a viable housing option and continue to operate a rent / bond deposit scheme. There are also active landlord forums in the boroughs and good relationships exist with some landlords.

The use of the Credit Union Account has been very popular with landlords as a way around the potential problems of direct payments of Housing Benefit being made to tenants and has also assisted tenants who have had problems budgeting to ensure their rent is paid in full and on time.

What are the problems we need to tackle?

It is clear that one of the biggest problems in accessing private sector accommodation will be welfare reform. The extension of the Shared Accommodation Rate from people under 25 to people under 35 has made it increasingly difficult for young people to secure private rented accommodation. Other welfare reforms such as the overall benefit cap may make it difficult for

some household on benefits, particularly larger families, to secure accommodation and will doubtless make them a less attractive option for private landlords.

It has also always been a challenge to try and place some of our most challenging clients (offenders, substance misuse etc.) into the private rented sector as landlords are concerned that they may not get their rent and have a problematic tenant with which to deal with. The reduced amount of floating support services will do nothing to alleviate these fears. It is believed that specific and targeted incentives would be needed for landlords to want to house vulnerable clients. Even with such initiatives, the rental market in South Notts is buoyant, with sustained demand from comfortably-off tenants who are unable to buy their first home, and so most landlords have no particular need to let to homeless applicants or Housing Benefit claimants. The councils therefore need to be realistic about what can be achieved in this area.

Particularly, there is a concern around the standard of properties that will be let to homeless and vulnerable clients, as those landlords with better quality properties are unlikely to need or want to let to clients on benefits and/or with complex needs.

How we can improve things?

Most of the feedback would like to see a return of the First Lets project or something similar, such as the use of the Homesearch website to advertise private rented properties and the return of a Good Tenants and Good Landlords scheme. Many people felt that accredited landlords were important to ensure good quality accommodation and landlords that were receptive to accepting vulnerable tenants and those on benefits. The fast-tracking of Housing Benefit claims was also cited as a good incentive to landlords who are reluctant to accept benefit claimants due to the complexity of claims and the length of time to process them.

It was also felt that the deposit/bond guarantee schemes' criteria could be reviewed and be consistently applied and that they could be promoted more widely to encourage greater takeup. One idea was to have a support guarantor, which would be more reassuring to landlords who otherwise might be reluctant to take on a vulnerable tenant.

There was also a lot of feedback regarding the importance of appropriate support to those in private rented accommodation to give the tenancies every opportunity to succeed. This may include a management element of private sector tenancies, and suggestions included working with social landlords to develop what management services could be offered.

Another idea worthy of consideration are rent a room schemes or incentives for people to take in lodgers. This is potentially a way around the extension of the Shared Accommodation Rate to under 35s and also a solution for tenants in the social rented sector affected by the Social Sector Size Criteria, which will see their Housing Benefit reduced if they have a spare bedroom.

9e. Accessing social rented housing

The three boroughs have developed a Choice Based Lettings approach to allocating social housing (Homesearch) since the publication of the last homelessness strategies in 2008. This topic was chosen to discuss accessing social rented housing, from the application process to how people are prioritised, the supply and demand for the various types of property and making the best use of housing stock.

What works well at the moment?

The greater transparency of choice based lettings was generally hailed as a success and said to be working well, in that applicants are able to assess for themselves the likely length of waiting time for properties and able to weigh up their options accordingly. Also, it was felt that the application form for housing was comprehensive and encompassed support needs and issues beyond just housing.

It was also felt that the ability to award band 2 priority to those applicants threatened with homelessness within 8 weeks was an important tool for preventing homelessness.

What are the problems we need to tackle?

There was a concern that many elderly and vulnerable applicants were finding the new system difficult to understand and are struggling with the bidding process. Also it was felt that there was a gap within the medical criteria and prioritisation as some people currently fell outside the criteria but still required some level of prioritisation.

Another suggestion was that more information and education is needed regarding the housing available and how it is prioritised. Linked with this was the particular issue of those who have former tenant rent arrears. In many cases, the clients are awarded band 2 but are unaware they will be overlooked for a property allocation due to arrears or historic anti-social behaviour. It was felt that this was giving false hope to applicants.

Lastly, there was a suggestion that floating support should be in place before any allocation of housing. This was seen as particularly important for those leaving care and also for young people moving on from supported housing. It was felt that this would help stop tenancy failure and repeat homelessness. Unfortunately, this does not square with the reduced capacity of floating support now available across the county.

How we can improve things?

Much of the feedback was around help for vulnerable people who were not bidding on the system. The suggestions were to be able to identify vulnerable applicants who are not placing bids on properties and make contact with them to offer help and guidance with bidding. This included improving the autobid function of the choice based lettings system to make it more useful.

The other feedback was also covered in the section on accessing the private rented sector which was using the Homesearch website more to advertise private rented properties.

9f. Pathways into training and work

What works well at the moment?

A number of useful services were mentioned, such as Connexions (which still exists, despite re-organisation and rebranding), Positive Futures (an activity-based social inclusion programme for 18 – 19 year olds) and Nottinghamshire County Council bringing together a wide range of services for young people under the Targetted Support Team, which has a single point of referral and can offer a holistic service to the young person.

(It should be noted that all the above apply to young people, and participants did not identify ways in which older homeless people could be helped into training or work.)

What are the problems we need to tackle?

There is so much information available for young people that there is a risk of overloading them, and information needs to be clear and structured. Although Connexions still exists, most of its community bases have closed, meaning people have to travel into the city centre for interviews. Schools are now required to pay to access the National Careers Service, and many cannot afford to in a time of budget constraint, so only offer the bare minimum access to the service website.⁵⁷

Lack of money can make it harder to get into work and earn money. Paying for travel and childcare are perennial problems, and funding that used to pay for bus fares has been removed. There is also the danger of the benefits trap (that earning money means benefits are reduced, minimising the return), which is particularly “steep-sided” in supported housing, where the rents are necessarily so high that few people can afford them without claiming Housing Benefit. Universal Credit is designed to tackle this problem by combining several benefits and applying a single, more comprehensible taper rate, so we will monitor the impact of this.

How we can improve things?

Much of the feedback here was quite generic, or covered things beyond the partners’ control (e. g. a call for careers advice to be reintroduced as standard into schools). The main message was that clarity is needed about what services are available and, once that clarity has been gained, this needs to be worked into Housing Options advice so that people at risk of homelessness or who have experienced it are referred to the right service that can help them into training or work.

9g. Support to prevent homelessness

This is a period of change in the support available to prevent homelessness in South Notts, with a range of specialist floating support services (for instance, for ex-offenders, people using drugs and alcohol, and people with mental health problems) being decommissioned by Nottinghamshire

⁵⁷ www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

County Council and replaced by a generic floating support service with a much lower capacity. This service is operated by Framework, an organisation with broad experience in all these areas. In addition, a number of voluntary agencies provide floating support, generally in specialist areas.

What works well at the moment?

Several services were regarded as very effective in supporting vulnerable people, including Cedar Housing, Broxtowe Youth Homelessness, NCC Targeted Support and Nottingham Nightstop. Partnerships between the support providers and referring agencies, such as the councils or CABs were seen as strong and effective, with good awareness of floating support and good publicity (e.g. through the Broxtowe Youth Homelessness directory and their schools work) making it easy for people to self-refer. Framework's Central Access Point was also seen as effective in directing people to the many services provided by Framework and by others.

What are the problems we need to tackle?

Apart from the lack of funding and lack of service capacity, a consistent message from practitioners was that providers and commissioners need to focus on people who have lower needs and need lower level support. This is the way to do effective early intervention, before they experience a crisis such as losing a home or ill health, which is likely to create higher support needs that are more expensive to address. Particularly, there is a lack of support for people with low level mental health problems, which can lead to worsening isolation, depression and anxiety and then to more serious problems.

For people living in supported accommodation, if they are offered a social housing tenancy, they normally have to decide whether to accept it very quickly, and sometimes have to move in (to satisfy Housing Benefit occupation requirements and avoid accruing rent arrears) before a floating support worker is available. This can mean that clients have a gap in their support when they need it most, and can struggle with setting up utilities, budgeting etc. Conversely, another problem is that some young people are staying in supported accommodation for too long, because they cannot be offered a tenancy until they are 18, which leads to some of the problems described in section 9i.

How we can improve things?

Participants had a large number of ideas about how to improve the success rate of the support that was provided, many of them around a better overlap between accommodation-based support and floating support provided when a person moves into their own property. Providers and commissioners should show more discretion over the time people need to stay in supported accommodation – some need more than others – and the “ready to move” form should be revised to make sure a referral is made to floating support when they do move on. Several participants also called for tenancy agreements to be adapted so that engaging with floating support was a condition of them (i. e. they would lose their property if they did not engage).

Other ideas included the creation of a “move-on rapid response team” that helped people for a short period with viewings, tenancy sign-ups, utilities, benefit claims etc.; referring staff shadowing support workers to help them judge what referrals are most appropriate in the future and a question about whether other faith groups in the county would be interested in organising a scheme similar

to Nottingham Nightstop, which provides ongoing support and fellowship for young homeless people as well as overnight accommodation.

Finally, several participants raised the need for a central directory of support services and agencies that can help people. Broxtowe Youth Homelessness publish directories for each of the three boroughs focussed on young people's needs, so these could form the basis of a wider directory. HLG also intend to revise their service directory, last published in 2008/2009, when some newly commissioned services are in place in 2013.

9h. Financial and debt advice

Debt is frequently a cause or a consequence of homelessness and a lack of appropriate and accessible financial and debt advice can create barriers to resolving a homeless situation.

What works well at the moment?

Access to credit unions offering jam jar accounts and reduced cost loans is increasing, and gathering support from Registered Providers. The ability of homeless teams to refer to benefit maximisation officers based in-house and to specialist advice agencies, for example, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Notts Housing Advice Service and Age UK, can be hugely beneficial. The work undertaken by many of the supported accommodation providers around financial awareness prior to individuals being ready for move-on into independent living is valuable although the numbers affected are relatively small.

What are the problems we need to tackle?

Although services are available, demand is increasing for services that are already oversubscribed, resulting in delays before people can be seen. Many individuals wait to approach the services until they are at crisis point as they are in denial about their problems and, at that stage, options are more limited. Lack of budgeting skills and financial intelligence are consistently the cause of loss of accommodation, and those with outstanding housing debts can be denied access to affordable accommodation. There is a lack of publicity for the services that are available, however if they were to be more widely advertised there would likely then be a lack of capacity to deal with demand.

How we can improve things?

Feedback has suggested that due to the limitations on the numbers that can be assisted by the available resources, more debt advice and information should be communicated by use of the internet, newsletter and workshops. Welfare reforms will lead to greater financial pressures on existing tenants and emphasis needs to be placed on targeting those most likely to be affected. Information needs to be easily accessible and aimed at the right level. Housing and benefit staff need to work together to deliver information to both existing tenants and those looking for accommodation, especially those identified as vulnerable to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the housing they can afford.

9i. Clients leaving institutions

It is widely recognised that people who are leaving a setting where accommodation has been provided for them for a long time, be that the Armed Forces, prison or a long period in hospital, can struggle to secure the housing they need in the private market. Such people account for only a small proportion of the homeless presentations to the councils, but homelessness for this reason should be avoidable with adequate planning and joint working arrangements in place.

What works well at the moment?

Few participants were able to reference existing good practice, but this may be due to lack of awareness of what is available than a complete void in provision (certainly the low numbers of presentations suggest so). Support for those leaving the Armed Forces from the Royal British Legion and Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Families Association (SAFFA) was mentioned, as was the fact that the Nottinghamshire Youth Offending Team have resettlement workers supporting clients who leave custody, and that patients who are bed-blocking in hospital are placed into Band 1 on the Homesearch scheme, which represents the maximum priority for social housing.

What are the problems we need to tackle?

Generically, many service users will lack the practical skills needed to live independently in the community, particularly if they have spent many years in an institutional way of life. Although supported accommodation may be an appropriate option, many people leaving the Armed Forces will receive resettlement pay, which reduces their Housing Benefit entitlement and makes it a very expensive option. The lack of welfare rights advice, particularly since the discontinuation of the Nottinghamshire County Council service, was highlighted as a gap in services.

How we can improve things?

Broxtowe Borough Council already carry out a regular surgery at Nottingham Prison to give advice to people due for release who have a connection to that borough, and it was suggested that Gedling and Rushcliffe councils could do the same. There were also several suggestions that closer working with probation was needed so that they were aware of what housing options were available.

On health, a hospital discharge protocol has been explored before but with little enthusiasm from partners. However, the councils should consider again whether it is necessary and what benefits it could bring for both them (reduced homelessness) and the NHS (reduced repeat use of health services by homeless people). The idea of having designated people within Housing Options teams who build relationships with both health, prison and Armed Forces was also popular. More widely, participants raised the importance of building links between housing provision and the Health & Wellbeing Board, which is now being managed by the County Council.

9j. Preparing for welfare reform

This discussion group followed a slightly different format to the others. It was very important to discuss welfare reform, given the potential impact on housing and homelessness, but many of the principles could not be changed by the local partnership. Rather, this table discussed how agencies will help vulnerable people to adapt to welfare reform and avoid the risk of homelessness.

What works well at the moment?

There is a major effort underway, led by stock-holding local authorities and housing associations, to visit tenants affected by the Social Sector Size Criteria and the overall benefits cap, and who will soon receive a monthly housing payment themselves through Universal Credit rather than Housing Benefit being paid directly to their landlords. The aims have been to inform them of the changes and help them explore their options. Credit Union accounts are increasingly being promoted, with social landlords committing funding to make them accessible to their tenants, ensuring that everyone will be able to access some sort of financial account. Discretionary Housing Payments are also very important for people whose benefits have been reduced, as they can allow “breathing space” to make new arrangements (such as taking in a lodger or moving to a smaller property). Finally, it is helpful that some vulnerable people, such as care leavers, can have their Housing Benefit paid directly to the landlord, which means landlords are more likely to let to them.

What are the problems we need to tackle?

The changes being made to the welfare system are complex, and there is a large volume of information to be cascaded down from specialists in benefit departments, for example, to frontline customer-facing staff and housing advisers. Therefore awareness of many of the changes remains low and there is a need for widespread, quality training for staff so they can advise customers.

It was felt that many people affected will not make changes before their benefits are reduced, but will wait and see how they are affected before they decide what to do (although this fits with the Government’s aims for benefit claimants to take informed decisions and take responsibility for their own finances and affairs). The Social Sector Size Criteria caused particular concern, as there will not be enough two bed social properties to rehouse everyone with spare bedrooms, and good quality private sector two bed properties in the three boroughs are often above the Local Housing Allowance (see section 5c). There was further concern about how each council’s local Council Tax Support scheme, and the replacement for the Social Fund (which is being managed by the County Council) will operate when they are launched to replace the national systems in April 2013.

How we can improve things?

Most suggestions here fell into two categories: increasing the supply of shared accommodation and working with claimants to help them plan ahead and budget.

On the former, there was discussion about how to persuade landlords to let shared accommodation to benefit claimants (covering some of the same ground as section 9d) and councils facilitating access to spare rooms for vulnerable people, rather than properties as a whole, which they will no longer be able to afford. It was suggested that councils or social landlords should lease properties to be shared from private landlords.

On the latter, it was emphasised that debt management and help with budgeting need to be available now for clients who will be affected from 2013 onwards, particularly those moving onto Universal Credit, rather than dealing with problems as and when they arise. Some social landlords demonstrated good practice – Derwent Living have carried out roadshows to raise awareness of benefit reform, as have Rushcliffe Borough Council, and Gedling Homes have employed a tenancy sustainment officer to give tenants advice when more of the decisions on money are put into their own hands.

Several other comments included that Rushcliffe Borough Council has implemented an online learning module for staff on welfare reform, which allows them to test their knowledge of the changes; mutual exchanges should be promoted in response to the size criteria; housing allocations policy need to align the bedrooms that a family is eligible for with the bedroom standard used to assess benefit eligibility, and that Homesearch letters need to include more information on what size property a household is eligible for and why.

Developing the action plan

The review of homelessness and consultation with partners has identified a number of areas where action could improve services, make partnership working more consistent and mend the gaps in provision. The councils now wish to consult partners on whether these action areas are appropriate, given the information contained in the review and the situation “on the ground”.

Following this stage, each action area will have a number of sub-actions identified, which will be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound). It is the councils’ hope that a number of partners from both the statutory and voluntary sectors will agree to take responsibility for completing certain sub-actions. In this way, the strategy and its action plan will not be solely an internal council document, but the focal point for true partnership working, with shared responsibility and shared accountability for progress through the regular meetings of the South Notts Interagency Homelessness Forum.

Areas for action

Preventing homelessness

- Develop clear pathways for the following key client groups, so that all partners know what is available and can find the help that their clients need
 - Young homeless people
 - Prison leavers
 - Care leavers
 - People with mental illness
 - Domestic violence survivors
- Make home visits and/or mediation a standard option that is presented where appropriate in parental eviction cases.
- Develop a range of ways to support both tenants and landlords when homeless households are housed in the private rented sector
- Ensure all potentially homeless clients have access to financial services suitable to their needs, to include a Credit Union rent account or basic bank account.
- Look at the capacity of debt advice services and see how they can be expanded if necessary (from Broxtowe 2008 action plan)
- Explore ways to help more people share homes, and support vulnerable people to do so.
- Continue the schools education programme for every secondary school and pupil referral unit in South Notts for lifetime of the strategy.
- Work with Registered Providers to achieve full sign-up to the pre-eviction protocol.
- Review the accessibility of the Choice Based Lettings system to increase participation.
- Improve the targeted spending of Discretionary Housing Payments (from Broxtowe 2008 action plan)
- Carry out a value for money review of the different homelessness prevention initiatives in use.
- Revisit [Homelessness Prevention: a guide to good practice](#) and assess whether everything recommended, or an alternative, is being provided if there is a need for it in South Notts.

Help at the point of homelessness

- Use the Homeless Link toolkit and information provided by the Street Outreach Team to check and improve the quality of rough sleeper estimates.

- Specifically state and quantify what quick access accommodation is needed to reduce/phase out the use of B&Bs for homeless households, and cost this provision so that action can be taken forward quickly when funding is available.
- Carry out a review of homeless people in South Notts against different diversity characteristics to identify any actions needed to tackle homelessness among a particular group.
- Review the need for an update to the 2004 BME housing needs study, given the disproportionate level of BME homelessness.
- Review Council temporary accommodation provision (from Broxtowe 2008 action plan)

Supporting the move away from homelessness

- Develop schemes to help young people to share housing and sustain their tenancy in shared accommodation.
- Hold housing options outreach sessions at the Friary to ensure rough sleepers get the advice they need and are connected to other services (from Rushcliffe 2008 action plan)
- Procure and monitor additional support services (follow-up to Gedling 2008 action plan)

Appendix

South Notts Interagency Homelessness Forum

The Forum meets four times a year, with meetings rotated between venues in Broxtowe, Rushcliffe and Gedling. The hosting local authority is also responsible for chairing the meeting, assembling the agenda beforehand, and for arranging any guests or speakers for the meeting. Broxtowe Youth Homelessness provide administrative support, taking notes of meetings, circulating papers and managing the membership list. As at November 2012, the agencies represented on the forum are:

Age UK Nottinghamshire

APAS

Beeston Citizens Advice Bureau

Broxtowe Borough Council

Broxtowe Women's Project

Broxtowe Youth Homelessness

Business in the Community

Carer's Federation

Catch 22

Cedar Housing

Compass

Double Impact

Eastwood Citizens Advice Bureau

Emmanuel House

Framework

The Friary

Gedling Borough Council

Gedling Homes

Home Group

Hope Nottingham

Hostel Liaison Group

Job Centre Plus

Midlands Women's Aid

Metropolitan

NACRO

Nottingham Credit Union

Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum

Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

Notts Housing Advice Service

Nottinghamshire County Council
(various teams represented)

Nottinghamshire Probation Trust

Nottinghamshire Police

58i (Nottingham Nightstop)

Places for People

Roshni

Rushcliffe Advice Network

Rushcliffe Borough Council

Rushcliffe CVS

South Nottingham College

Theo Langston Care

Trent Vineyard

Tuntum Housing Association

Voluntary Action Broxtowe

Women's Aid Integrated Services

Young Potential

Background papers

Equality Impact Assessment



EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Policy/Service/Procedure to be assessed	Joint homelessness strategy	
Assessment completed by:	Michael Gillie, Housing Strategy & Development Officer	
<p>Aims/objectives of the Policy/Service/Procedure:</p> <p>A homelessness strategy, incorporating a review of homelessness, has been developed jointly between Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe borough councils. The strategy aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent homelessness • Provide help at the point of homelessness • Support the move away from homelessness. <p>The proposed outcomes for the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one should have to sleep rough in South Notts • All local authorities will work with partners to reduce the number of homeless applications they need to consider year on year • All councils will minimise the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation for homeless households, with the long term aim of ending it altogether. • Knowing that there is insufficient social housing to meet demand, all potentially homeless clients will get the help they need to access private rented housing • All young people in South Notts should learn about homelessness and realistic housing options in school • All client groups with special needs will have clear and up to date referral pathways so that it is clear which agency is responsible for providing services to them at what time 		
Key Performance Indicator	Current Performance	Target
LI087 Homelessness applications received	86 in 2011/12 year	None
LI089 Individuals interviewed to prevent homelessness	Monthly – 177 in Sept 2012	None
NI156 Households living in temporary accommodation	12 as at Sept 2012	12 or fewer, 2013/14
LI086 Average length of time spent in temp. accommodation	14.4 weeks as at Sept 2012	12 weeks, 2013/14

Who are the customers and stakeholders of this service?	
<p>People who apply to the Council as homeless (including those to whom no duty is owed)</p> <p>People who approach the Council because they are at risk of losing their home</p> <p>Other people at higher risk of homelessness (e.g. people in debt), whether or not they approach the Council</p> <p>People living in the Council's temporary accommodation</p> <p>People who have moved on and found accommodation after experiencing homelessness</p> <p>Partners in the statutory and voluntary sector working with the above customers</p>	
Detail below what information you already have about the impact this policy/service/procedure has on the following Protected Characteristics including results from consultation, complaints, census:	
RACE (Black and minority ethnic people)	People from BME groups are over-represented in among homeless applicants compared to their share of the overall population. They accounted for 12.8% of homelessness applications made to the Council from 2008 to 2012, but only 6.1% of the population (2001 Census).
GENDER AND GENDER REASSIGNMENT (Men/women and trans)	Numbers of single men and women applying as homeless are roughly equal, but households with children are overwhelmingly those with single female parents, meaning many more women than men overall apply as homeless. Domestic violence is more likely to affect women, and this is one of the main causes of homelessness. The impact on transgender people is unknown.
DISABILITY (Disabled people)	Of 417 homelessness decisions made between 2008 and 2012, 5 applicants (1.1%) were recorded as having a physical disability and 7 applicants (1.7%) as having a learning disability. These are considerably below national prevalence rates for these types of disability. It does not appear, therefore, that disabled people are at any greater risk of homelessness than the general population.
SEXUAL ORIENTATION (Gay/Lesbian/bisexual People)	No assessment carried out.
RELIGION OR BELIEF (People from different faiths)	No assessment carried out.
AGE (People of different ages)	Very high levels of under 25s access the homelessness service – see 2b of strategy for reasons. Very low levels of over 60s, because there is sufficient sheltered accommodation for most people over 60 who needs it.

How will this policy/service/procedure impact on the following Protected Characteristics?		
	Positive impact	Negative impact
RACE (Different racial groups)	Action proposed to review need for update to BME Housing Needs Study (2004) to understand high levels of BME homelessness	
SEX (Men/women)	Action proposed to carry out a review of homeless people against different protected characteristics. Action proposed to develop pathways for domestic violence survivors.	
DISABILITY (Disabled people)	Action proposed to carry out a review of homeless people against different protected characteristics	
SEXUAL ORIENTATION (Gay/Lesbian/bi-sexual people)	Action proposed to carry out a review of homeless people against different protected characteristics	
RELIGION OR BELIEF (People from different faiths)	Action proposed to carry out a review of homeless people against different protected characteristics	
GENDER REASSIGNMENT (Trans people)	Action proposed to carry out a review of homeless people against different protected characteristics	
PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY	No impact identified	
MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	No impact identified.	
AGE (People of different ages)	Currently five proposed actions to help prevent and respond to homelessness	

	among young people. Homelessness among older people is less common.		
What changes could be made to the policy/service/procedure to address any negative impacts?			
None identified resulting from EIA.			
What monitoring will be carried out to ensure this policy/service/procedure meets diverse needs?			
No assessment of the homelessness service has been carried out against the protected characteristics of sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity or marriage and civil partnership. Some of these characteristics were not recorded in a way that could be reported in the historic software system. They have become available to report on since the new software was introduced in January 2012. One of the actions proposed in the strategy is to carry out an assessment against all characteristics. There is no evidence at present to suggest that customers receive a different service based on these characteristics, so this assessment will inform what future monitoring and actions are required. It may be that all protected characteristics continue to be reported on; it may be that some are judged to be less relevant and dropped from future monitoring.			
What actions will be included in your service plan arising from this assessment?			
Action	Outcome	Date?	Who?
Are you satisfied that all aspects of this policy/service/procedure have been thoroughly assessed for all the strands of diversity and that no further investigation is required? Y			
If no then a fuller impact assessment is required.			

Signed..... (manager)

Signed..... (Corporate Equality Representative)