

Title: Homelessness Appendix

To: Communities & Equalities Scrutiny Committee

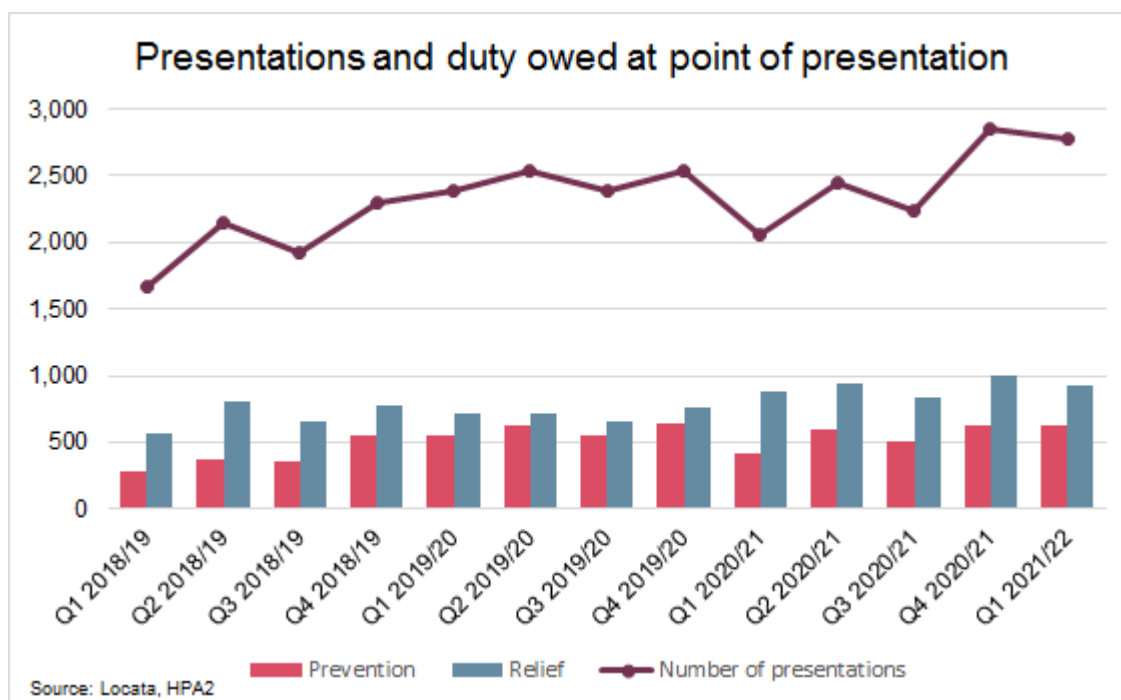
Date: 20 July 2021

Introduction

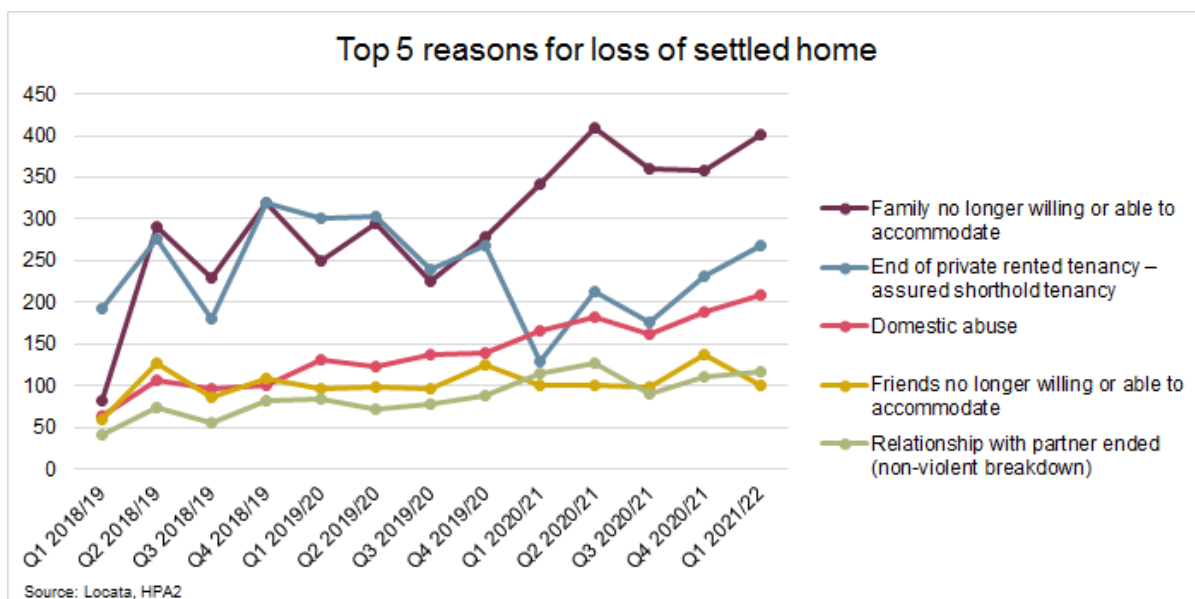
This report is to provide a brief overview of new developments within the Homelessness Service, and to provide an update on the current position of homelessness.

Current Presentation Figures

The number of presentations remains high, consistently over 200 per week. The last 4 weeks have seen a continuous increase, with w/c 28 June having 241 presentations.



The number of households where the end of a private rented tenancy was the reason for homelessness has returned to same level in the latest quarter as the last quarter before the Covid-19 pandemic.



The current numbers in dispersed accommodation (over and above hostel, housing related support, ABEN and B&B accommodation) are 1,753 families and 254 singles.

Management redesign

The management redesign has been successful, and the service now has the capacity to focus upon areas that it needs to. Staffing and management has increased in the areas of:

- Private rented sector and move on out of temporary accommodation,
- Rents,
- Housing management and inspections
- Housing assessment and Prevention.

The Domestic Abuse funding (see below) will help with the influx of people presenting as homeless with domestic abuse as a reason and will also help with increasing the levels of floating support.

District Homes Pilot

The pilot to move homeless families out of Council managed accommodation into registered provider managed accommodation has commenced. The project will be evaluated over the financial year to ensure it is meeting the Councils requirements.

Covid Vaccinations

Vaccinating complex individuals either in temporary accommodation or sleeping on the streets has been successful, with 574 receiving their first jab and 274 their second. Finding people who sleep rough or have left their accommodation in order to have their second jab is challenging but excellent partnership working across the voluntary sector, PCNs and Urban Village is ensuring the work is progressing well.

Date	First Vaccine	Second Vaccine
24/05	500	171
28/05	13	31

07/06	4	14
21/06	30	23
28/06	13	18
05/07	14	17
Total	574	274

B&B Project

The service is trying to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families except for out of hours presentations. A project board and team have been set up and the scheme is currently being piloted with 8 families. Five families have already been placed directly into dispersed accommodation and the situation will be monitored for 8 weeks. The project is being monitored; risks and concerns that have become apparent are discussed. Conversations with MHCLG and other Local Authorities across the country are also taking place to learn from and share best practice.

Apex House

The other way in which we are trying to reduce placements in B&B and a quick move on to the private rented sector is through Apex House. This opened in March 2021 and the outcomes are currently:

- 12 Families moved into private rented sector.
- 2 Families reconnected with family.
- 1 family with complex needs moved to Willowbank (homeless families accommodation)
- 3 families moved on to dispersed property.

Womens Direct Access

Over the last twelve months at the centre, a psychologist has been on site for part of the week delivering PIE training and support to both staff and residents. Due to covid restrictions, it has been difficult to bring in volunteers, but the volunteer co-ordinator has been undertaking art projects with residents. Moving forward the volunteer co-ordinator will be offering some therapeutic work and a drop-in service is being developed to bring additional services on site, for example, mental health, psychologists and MASH (Manchester Action on Street Health).

Domestic Abuse and Violence

The new Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a new duty on local authorities to provide support to victims in refuges and other safe accommodation. To support delivery of this new duty Manchester has been awarded funding from MHCLG for 2021/22. The funding is guaranteed for three years, but funding allocations for 2022/23 and 2023/24 have not yet been set.

Proposals are currently being developed with key partners to deliver a coordinated Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation Pathway, which will include:

- Integrated specialist front door and support planning: this will include specialist DV&A Advisors within the Housing Solutions Team to assist with accommodation and support planning.
- Enhanced safe accommodation and support offer: this will include additional recovery support and capacity to be delivered in refuges; a specialist floating support service to work with individuals and families in dispersed temporary accommodation; sanctuary support; a dedicated children's offer; and specialist support services to support individuals with protected characteristics, including our LGBT Accommodation Project.

- Move on and recovery: this will include a Private Rented Sector offer and resettlement support to work with individuals and families as they move into independent accommodation.

In addition to New Burdens funding Manchester is also developing a bid for an MHCLG funded

‘Respite Room’, which will deliver a safe, single gender space with intensive, trauma informed support for vulnerable females who sleep rough with a history of sexual violence or DV&A. Decisions on bids will be made in July with successful services commencing delivery in October 2021.

Private Rented Sector

The PRS (Private Rented Sector) Team has successfully moved 975 people into the Private Rented Sector between the period of June 2020 – June 2021. The staff are now based together within the PRS Team as one team, rather than being deployed across the directorate. This has increased the volume of staff working in the PRS Team to 21 officers.

The Team will be split into three key areas across the directorate:

Singles and Couples - 7 officers will focus on securing accommodation for singles & couples accommodated in the following units of temporary accommodation including, The Longford Centre, Princess Road, Shared Housing, 1496 Rochdale Road, WWC (Woodward Court), B&B, Housing Related Support schemes & ABEN projects

Families - 7 officers will focus on securing accommodation for families currently residing at Apex House, Temporary Dispersed Accommodation, Oak lodge, Willowbank & Emergency bed & breakfast provision.

Prevention: 7 officers will focus on homeless prevention of singles, couples and families and will working closely with the Housing Solutions Team and Section 21 Team to secure accommodation prior to applicants becoming homeless reducing demand on temporary accommodation.

We have been successful in securing additional funding via MHCLG to secure 70 units of accommodation and resettlement support for ex-offenders. Manchester has a considerable number of people who sleep rough within this cohort who meet the criteria for this scheme. Tenancy failure is high within this cohort and the lack of stable accommodation is known to be a significant contributor to re offending rates. To mitigate this risk, an intensive resettlement package will be delivered by 2 Tenancy Compliance Officers in conjunction with multi agency partners. This will ensure tenancy sustainment is achieved, thereby reducing the likelihood of re offending and risk to the community.

Private Rented Sector Eviction Working Group

The Private Rented Sector (PRS) Eviction Working Group was reconvened in May 2021 and has met twice since then. The group includes colleagues from Homelessness, Strategic Housing, Revenues and Benefits Unit, Neighbourhoods, Strategic Comms, and PRI, alongside representatives from the DWP, Shelter, Citizen’s Advice Manchester, Cheetham Hill Advice Centre, and Greater Manchester Law Centre. The purpose of the group is to understand the potential negative impact of Covid-19 on the PRS in Manchester, and work together to minimise the number of households in the PRS who are evicted. So far the group has:

- Shared information about current interventions to prevent eviction and homelessness.

- Developed a Risk Matrix which shows the likelihood of evictions in local areas across Manchester to understand where the risk to tenants is highest.
- Agreed how Housing Advisers can collaborate with Money Advice specialist to ensure that the Breathing Space scheme is used effectively for people at risk of losing their home.
- Set up a smaller group to develop a Communications Strategy so that we can effectively get key messages out to both tenants and landlord in the PRS.

Rough Sleeping

The National Street Count for Rough Sleeping took place on the 27th November 2020. Subsequent bi-monthly counts were cancelled due to the Lockdown, and were reinstated on the 28th May 2021. During this period, 4am outreach sessions were conducted every other month to identify the number of people sleeping rough, per table 1. The number of people sleeping rough on a single night snapshot has reduced since the national count and remains a stable figure.

Table 1 number of people on a single night snapshot:

National Count November	68
January 4am outreach	37
March 4am outreach	39
May count	40

The Outreach InReach Team are working in partnership with other outreach teams, indoor provisions, the Street Engagement Hub, and specialist support services to develop a clear offer and pathway to all people sleeping rough in Manchester. An action plan has been developed in a monthly Partnership Outreach Meeting, to ensure a consistent and rapid approach is taken to everyone sleeping rough. The action plan includes the following areas: improved identification of people sleeping rough (visible and hidden), providing a consistent and assertive outreach offer that is trauma informed and delivering harm reduction toolkit and specialist interventions (Navigators, Mental Health, Substance Misuse, Physical Health, Social Care, Learning Disability, Autism and General Practitioner access.) A joint report is being developed with all outreach services on the combined number of people sleeping rough, interventions delivered, and outcomes achieved.

This multi-agency approach has improved access to specialist support services, that follows people from the streets into accommodation, such as ABEN, the MAS (Manchester Access & Support) Gateway, in house services and the Protect Programme. The Navigator team and Protect Programme take a lead on coordinating this through a personalised approach, which has improved people's sustainment of accommodation and support.

The Outreach and Protect teams have been successful in receiving continuation of funding from the Ministry of Housing and Local Communities Government up until the 31/03/2021 for the Rough Sleepers Initiative. The Protect Program is a specialised accommodation pathway for people who were evicted from or did not access “everyone in,” who have multiple disadvantages.

This funding provides to following positions across the three teams

Service	Role	Positions
Outreach	Outreach worker	4
	Social Worker	1

InReach	Team Leader	1
	Navigators	5
Protect	Team Leader	1
	Navigators	4
	Social Workers	2

From March 2020 to March 2021, the outreach team has worked with over 650 people sleeping rough, of this 300 people were new flow. During "Everyone In" the outreach team supported over 500 people into accommodation and a further 180 people have been accommodated through outreach. Navigators lead on support for 8-10 people, to provide an intense multi-agency support package with a personal budget, that stays with the person from the streets into accommodation. During "Everyone In" Navigators were redeployed to support this initiative. They linked people to substance misuse, mental health and health services and created support and move on plans and facilitated reconnections. In addition, they have 20 active cases and 36 people have been supported into accommodation and/or alternative support interventions. The Outreach Social Worker has provided specialist advice to 132 people, provided 119 early interventions to reduce risk and 18 long term interventions.

The Protect Program targets people known to outreach services who are classed as long-term rough sleeping. This consists of people who have been seen on three separate months, sleeping rough over the period of six months. The number is higher than the street count because people are eligible who are sleeping rough or are in temporary accommodation, such as ABEN and Everyone In.

Eligible Cohort	102
Worked with	70
Refused the service or other pathway in place	30
Accommodated or are being supported to move into accommodation	40
Number accommodated in total	28
Dispersed accommodation	15
Settled move on accommodation	3
Abandoned Dispersed accommodation	1

The Rough Sleepers Initiative also funds On the Out to support prisons Leavers and a No First Night Out initiative for young people.

On The Out	
Homelessness relieved	418
Prison leavers prevented from becoming homeless	367
No Second Night Out	
Young people worked with	184
Street homeless	112
Immanent risk of street homelessness	72
Emergency accommodation placements made	102
Temporary accommodation placements	90
Longer term accommodation placements	86

The Rough Sleeper Accommodation Program (RSAP), funded by Homes England and MHCLG, was launched in 2021 and will provide over 70 properties and tenancies to individuals either at risk of rough sleeping or with a history of rough sleeping. Manchester has also been successful in securing funding for 2021/22, which will see an additional 26 units of accommodation brought into use.

Cold Weather

Manchester's cold weather offer is both designed and delivered through a group of core partners including our homeless directorate, The Booth Centre, The Men's Room, Barnabus, Lifeshare, Shelter, Coffee 4 Craig, On the Out, Urban Village, Manchester's homeless mental health services, MASH, The Boaz Trust and Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit. This core group meets very regularly throughout the year with the frequency increasing throughout the winter months. More recently the group has been meeting to review last year's programme in detail and design winter 21/22. A much wider group of partners and agencies are engaged when temperatures drop to ensure our referral processes are shared with all appropriate organisations in the city.

We have a specific volunteer programme and recruitment with opportunities to support the cold weather offer, this was funded by the Council in 2019 and as planned has had a positive long-lasting legacy from then into subsequent years.

As with many services our cold weather offer throughout 20/21 was adapted to assist with and integrate with operations to reduce the impact of the pandemic. This resulted in the use of single room accommodation, more remote referral processes to limit clients congregating in large numbers and more importantly an extended offer of accommodation and support. This extended offer transformed our collective opportunities of engaging those who accessed the service and generating positive long-term outcomes.

We activated our cold weather services on 24th December 2020 and operated up to until early April 2021. In this time period we accommodated 512 individuals with 270 accessing more stable accommodation at the point of referral or not long after.

The review is yet to conclude but key issues that have emerged so far include: To ascertain if there is a cost benefit to having a more extended cold weather offer; better linking mental health services; providing a more streamlined pathway for homeless assessments; clarifying pathways for groups such as prison leavers, NRPF and under 25s so cold weather accommodation is a last resort offer and not the first option due to its accessible nature.

Hospital Discharge

The hospital discharge accommodation service at Dalbeattie Court has been very successful. Since opening in November 2019 the service has supported 49 people. The average length of stay per person has been approximately 10 weeks. To date 35 residents have moved on from the service into their own social housing tenancies. All of whom are still maintaining their tenancies. Several people have moved into their own sheltered accommodation. Others have moved to Private Rented Sector tenancies or have reconnected with family. Due to the Homes England funding, the building will be handed back to Adult Social Care in July 2021 to be used for the original intended purpose. The service has identified Elizabeth Yarwood Court in Ardwick as a suitable alternative and local Members are very supportive of the scheme moving there temporarily. This building has 29 bedspaces and so will continue to reduce the number of Delayed Transfers Of Care in the health system significantly. The homelessness directorate is looking to have the site operational by August.

Review of Temporary Accommodation

A consultant has been commissioned to undertake a review of the in-house and commissioned temporary accommodation that Manchester has. This review will have recommendations that the service can take forward to improve its temporary accommodation stock and service to the people of Manchester. The finalised report is due at the end of July.

No Recourse to Public Funds

Finding local solutions for non-UK nationals with eligibility restrictions facing homelessness, 2021-2022.

Manchester has been selected to be part of this project along with Bedford, Haringey and Wolverhampton. The project aims to drive more inclusive local homelessness systems that are better able to find solutions for people facing homelessness who have restrictions on their entitlements to support and benefits due to their immigration status. Led by Homeless Link with the support of project partners the No Accommodation Network (NACCOM) and funders the Lloyds Bank Foundation, it will run for one year from April 2021 to May 2022.

Currently, statutory provision for people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) and some ineligible EU nationals is extremely limited by national legislation. The findings from the work at the local level will be used to continue to make the case for reforms to national policy, an end to the 'hostile environment' and increased investment in legal advice and other specialist support.

Local innovation during the ongoing pandemic has shown that much can be achieved by services and commissioners even within the current legislative framework. Progress on this often depends on a culture shift, new partnerships and greater understanding within the homelessness system of the needs, concerns and entitlements of non-UK nationals which we demonstrated most notably during our activities through the "Everyone In" programme.

The back end of this project will involve national dissemination through events and workshops and round table ministerial sessions.

In addition to the ongoing work with Homeless Link and NACCOM, the Commissioning Team are leading on development of a policy to set out how the Council will respond to requests for accommodation from people who are sleeping rough but who are not eligible for homelessness assistance under Part 7 Housing Act 1996.

The need to draft a policy arose from a recent case in the High Court (*Ncube v Brighton and Hove City Council*) which considered how local authorities can lawfully provide accommodation to people who are sleeping rough during a time of emergency, such as a pandemic, when they are not eligible for assistance. The ruling had some immediate implications to the way that local authorities exercise powers to secure accommodation, however it did not introduce any new duties or responsibilities, and as Manchester has often secured accommodation for people who are sleeping rough who are not eligible for assistance, particularly within the 'A Bed Every Night' (ABEN) accommodation schemes, the judgement did not require an immediate change in practice.

The new policy has been drafted in collaboration with colleagues in legal services and the NRPF team, with input from key partner organisations, including the Booth Centre and Greater Manchester Law Centre. The policy will help to codify the existing approach in Manchester and will allow us to make it clear to our partners what the councils approach will be when dealing with requests to secure accommodation for people who are not eligible for assistance. It will also serve to make it clear what the roles of our partners will be within the process and set out our expectations on how we will work together to support people who are sleeping rough in the city.

Transformation Programme

An external consultancy firm will be commissioned to provide additionality to the service to innovate and develop new ways of working. A specification is in the process of being written to proceed through the procurement process.

Children's Services

Colleagues in Children's Services have established a post-16 Accommodation Project to develop a range of accommodation and support provision for children and young people 16 years and older, working with good quality and registered providers of housing. The offer is intended to include Foyer models, supported lodgings, stepping stone, intergenerational models and self-contained permanent homes, to ensure sustainable and timely move on to independent living post 18 years old.

Commissioners in the Homelessness Directorate have a seat on the project board and are supporting the development of the work, alongside colleagues across the council including Strategic Housing and Revenues and Benefits.