



Housing Select Committee

Report title: Homelessness in Lewisham and the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Date: 12 March 2020

Key decision: No.

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Director for Housing Services

Outline and recommendations

This report provides an update on the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act in Lewisham. This includes a review of the impact of these changes, the response of the service and plans to review the policy framework to support more effective implementation of the Act.

It is recommended that Housing Select Committee note and comment on the content of this report.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

There has been no prior engagement or decision making with regards this report.

Housing Select Committee was previously asked to review an update on the implementation of the act in Lewisham on the 17th December 2018. The details of this report and the accompanying presentation are available at the following link.

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=135&MIId=5030&Ver=4>

1. Summary

- 1.1. In April 2018 the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRAct) was introduced, which represents the most significant change in the rights of homeless people in the last 15 years.
- 1.2. The HRAct added two new duties to the original statutory rehousing duty: the duty to prevent homelessness and the duty to relieve homelessness. Together, these have:
 - extended entitlement to help, particularly for single households
 - embedded a focus on prevention,
 - renewed a focus on local joint working;
 - started a fundamental shift in homelessness services to a more personalised and client-focussed approach.
- 1.3. The HRAct was originally intended to reduce the number of accepted homeless households, as local authorities would be working with households earlier to prevent or relieve homelessness. Whilst it is the case that the number of preventions have significantly increased since the HRAct came in, it is also the case that across London and Lewisham the number of acceptances has increased along with an increase of the use of temporary accommodation. This is due to the wider economic and structural factors which are also contributing to the pressures currently faced by homelessness services.
- 1.4. There was a underestimation by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government of the cost of managing the HRAct, particularly in London. This, in addition to the rising use of TA, has meant that homelessness services are under significant financial strain.
- 1.5. The service has introduced a number of changes to respond to these pressures, and continues to work to embed the HRAct.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that Housing Select Committee note the content of this report.

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3. Policy Context

- 3.1. The contents of this report are aligned with the current legislative framework, and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) single departmental plan.¹
- 3.2. This report is consistent with the Council's policy framework. It supports the following priorities of the Council's Corporate Strategy 2018-22:
 - Tackling the housing crisis – Everyone has a decent home that is secure and affordable
- 3.3. It will also support the delivery of the Council's Housing Strategy 2015-20, specifically the objective of helping residents at times of severe and urgent housing need.
- 3.4. We are currently publically consulting on the new Housing Strategy 2020-26, and undertaking work to implement a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2020-26.

4. Background

- 4.1. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRAAct) was introduced on the 3rd April 2018. The HRAAct is the the most significant change in Homelessness legislation in a generation.
- 4.2. The HRAAct made significant changes to the eligibility for homelessness assistance, and the timeframe under which assistance must be given. This has fundamentally shifted the intention and culture of statutory homelessness services to one of proactive prevention and relief, and has intentionally expanded eligibility for a personalised homelessness assistance service to everyone, regardless of whether they will meet the full housing duty criteria.
- 4.3. All households that are eligible for public funds are entitled to proactive support via a personalised housing plan (PHP) from the local authority if they are at risk of becoming homeless. The HRAAct introduced a statutory 56 day period where the service must work with households to prevent homelessness, and a 56 day period where the service must work with households to relieve homelessness. The prevention and relief duties apply regardless of whether applicants are in priority need or not.
- 4.4. The HRAAct did not make any changes to the 'main housing duty.' This means that that households still need to be in priority need and be unintentionally homeless for them to be provided with longer term temporary accommodation and a final offer of accommodation in line with our statutory duties.
- 4.5. The HRAAct has introduced a greater requirement to support single homeless applicants. It also introduced a 'duty to refer,' which compels certain services to make a referral to the LA where they know their service user is homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- 4.6. The HRAAct has had a significant impact on the the way Lewisham delivers its Homelessness service, which is fully explored in this report.
- 4.7. In parallel to the act being introduced, the economic and structural challenges around affordability remain, and local authorities have had to respond to these challenges through an increased use of Temporary Accommodation.
- 4.8. There are a number of factors driving this increase, including:

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-communities-and-local-government-single-departmental-plan/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government-single-departmental-plan--2>

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- A lack of genuinely affordable homes and a decline in the available social homes for let;
 - A severe shortage of available properties at LHA where the landlord is willing to let to homeless, largely benefit dependent, claimants;
 - The increasing cost of the private rented sector (PRS) and an increasing reliance on the PRS;
 - Welfare reform, including the freezing of local housing allowance (LHA) until 2018.
- 4.9. Nationally, TA placements have been rising at around twice the rate of homelessness acceptances. Since 2010/11 homelessness acceptances have increased by 34% whilst the use of TA has risen by 71%. This highlights increasing reliance on TA by local authorities to meet housing need, due to the drivers outlined above which are narrowing the options available in terms of housing supply.
- 4.10. The lack of genuinely affordable accommodation and high cost of housing has a double impact of both increasing the demand on homelessness services and also restricting the supply of housing available to local authorities to find solutions. As a result, a multi-pronged approach to delivering a homeless service must be adopted.

5. Homelessness in London and Lewisham

Overview of homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation in London

- 5.1. Homelessness is one of the most pressing challenges. The number of homeless households has increased and remains high in London. London councils account for 66% of all TA placements nationally.
- 5.2. There were over 5,000 more households accepted as homeless by local authorities in 2017/18 than there were in 2010/11, an increase of 50%. London accounts for two thirds of all TA placements in England.
- 5.3. At the same time as this increased demand for assistance, there has been a decrease in the supply of affordable accommodation. The latest most reliable data shows that between 2011 and 2018 there was a 26% decrease in the number of social lets that London authorities made, and the proportion of social housing stock re-let in London during 18/19 was only 2%.²
- 5.4. In addition, the private rented sector (PRS) across London has become even more inaccessible for those on low incomes, with an estimated 2% of properties available at LHA rate or lower³ and continued issues with private rented landlords accepting tenants who claim housing benefit or universal credit.
- 5.5. This combination of increased demand and decreased supply in the PRS and social housing sectors, has resulted in local authorities increasing their use of temporary accommodation year on year, as shown in chart 1. A report commissioned by London Councils highlights that it is a constant, often daily, struggle to find enough accommodation for households needing TA. Over 40% of family households are now placed outside their own borough⁴.
- 5.6. A significant proportion of the TA increase is attributed to a rise in the use of nightly

²https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/861471/Social_Housing_Lettings_in_England_April_2018_to_March_2019.pdf

³ https://england.shelter.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/1801101/LHA_and_homelessness.pdf

⁴ <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/housing-and-planning/homelessness/cost-homelessness-services-london>

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paid accommodation, which is the most expensive and often the poorest quality. Over the last 5 years has been a 37% increase in the number of households in Nightly Paid accommodation arranged by London authorities, from 15,300 to 21,000, as illustrated by Chart 1. London boroughs spent almost £350m on nightly paid accommodation in 2017/18 alone.⁵

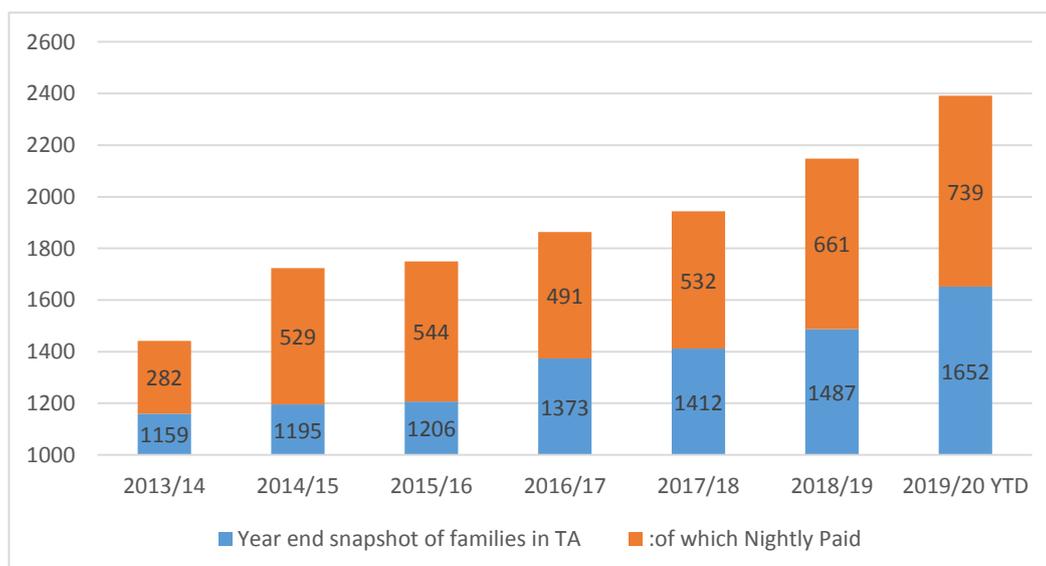
Chart 1 - Number of households in temporary accommodation in London



Homelessness in Lewisham

5.7. As at the end of January 2020, over 2,390 households were in TA arranged by Lewisham, of which 739 are in Nightly Paid accommodation, as shown in Chart 2. There has been a 23% increase in the number of households in TA arranged by Lewisham since March 2018, which is the most significant rise in a short period of time experienced by the council.

Chart 2 – Number of households in temporary accommodation arranged by Lewisham



⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing>

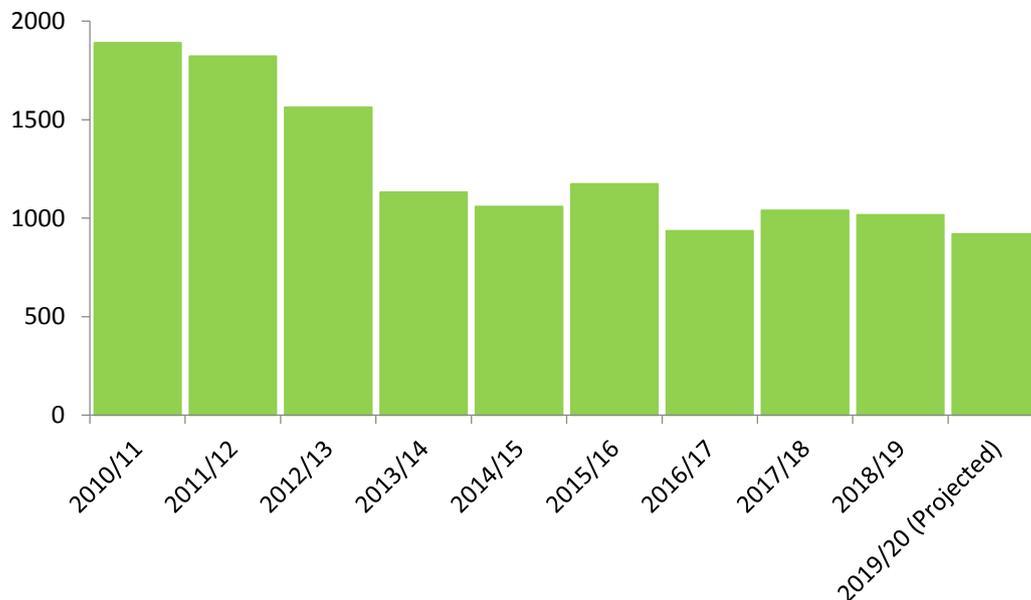
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- 5.8. There has also been a year on year decline in social lets in Lewisham, highlighting the correlation between lack of supply and increased need for TA. Chart 3 shows a 45% decrease in the number of social and affordable lets in Lewisham since 2010/11, as the number of available affordable properties has decreased.

Chart 3 – Number of lets to households on the housing register



- 5.9. Since April 2018, 31% of homeless households became homeless because of their family or friends no longer being able to provide accommodation. A similar number - 28% - became homeless due to their PRS tenancy coming to an end, largely as a consequence of the termination of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy.
- 5.10. The decreasing number of affordable PRS properties is a significant factor in the levels of homelessness in Lewisham, as there are so few properties that are available at LHA rate and where the landlord is willing to rent to households that claim housing benefit or universal credit. This places additional pressure on the Council where we secure affordable properties for temporary accommodation from the private rented sector.
- 5.11. Lewisham has the same challenges as London boroughs in sourcing accommodation to be used for temporary accommodation. Lewisham always seeks to place households in TA in or as close to Lewisham as possible. For a full overview of out of borough TA placements, please see the report heard at Housing Select Committee in September 2019⁶.
- 5.12. Currently there is not enough permanent affordable housing in Lewisham for those in TA to move into. The reliance on TA will continue to rise without the corresponding number of genuinely affordable housing across the PRS and social housing sector to match the 'inflow' of households into TA, or increases in homeless prevention and longer term settled moves into the PRS.

6

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s67572/07%20Out%20of%20borough%20placements%20-%20180919.pdf>

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6. The impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act in London

The impact for London Authorities of implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act

- 6.1. Local authorities across London have continued to adapt their services since the HRAct came in.
- 6.2. Just under two years since implementation, research and data suggests that the full impact of the HRAct is not yet understood, with boroughs across London reporting significantly different figures at different stages. The new system of data recording – HCLIC – has been a significant challenge to use.
- 6.3. The HRAct has had a range of impacts for local authorities in London⁷:
 - *Numbers approaching the local authority:* As intended, the HRAct has increased the number of households approaching boroughs for assistance. In the first year of the HRAct, around 55,000 households were assessed by a London borough homelessness service as compared to an average of under 30,000 per annum over the previous ten years, representing an 83% increase. However, the magnitude of this change has varied across different boroughs.
 - *Staffing requirements:* to manage the change, authorities have had to hire a number of new additional staff, often using agency staff due to a lack of certainty with funding and challenges in recruitment.
 - *Working practices, culture and workload:* The working practices and culture of the homelessness services are changing across London in line with the ethos and intention of the HRAct. However, significantly more time and resource is needed to manage cases at various stages which has had implications for staffing and costs. There has also been a significant administrative burden as a result of the HRAct as a consequence of data submission requirements.
 - *Varied experiences of cases:* There has been an increase of complex cases which need substantial input, mainly from the increase in support for single applicants, whilst on the other hand there has been a reported high drop-out rate where applicants were given personal housing plans but didn't return⁸
 - *Partnership working:* From October 2018, the HRAct placed some organisations under a duty to refer to a local housing authority where they consider that a service user may be homeless or at risk of homelessness, and agrees to the referral.
- 6.4. With an increase in the opportunities for prevention and relief of homelessness at earlier points, London authorities have reported significantly higher prevention activity, although it is varied across London. Between April 2018 and June 2019 almost 10,000 households have had their homelessness prevented across London.
- 6.5. Analysis suggest that the intended outcomes of the Act – falling costs after 3 years, and a reduction in the need for TA as preventions increase, will not be realised and by some margin. On the contrary, with the increased workload, administration process and responsibilities for prevention and relief, costs of delivering the service is expected to rise. In addition, with increasing pressures in the housing market and a lack of housing to move households out of TA into, it is unlikely in London that the use of TA will decrease.

⁷ <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/housing-and-planning/homelessness/cost-homelessness-services-london>

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6.6. The underestimation of both the financial impact and the administrative time needed to fully comply with the act is further explored in section 8 of this report.

7. The impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act in Lewisham

7.1. The intention of the HRA – increasing eligibility for homelessness assistance – has resulted in an expected increase in the number of approaches to the service in Lewisham. Whilst it is not possible to directly compare the position before and after the act, the service estimate an increase of more than 50% in the number of cases that they have worked with between 2016/17 and 2018/19.

7.2. The main driver for this increase is the change in caseload with regards single homelessness. Between April 2016 and March 2018 there were 426 homelessness applications by single households, whereas since April 2018 there have been almost 2,200.

7.3. Prior to the new legislation, the single homeless service was largely working with non-priority households in an advisory capacity. The new legal duties require that we assess and complete a personalised housing plan with any applicant who is eligible and homeless or threatened with homelessness, and then take proactive steps to prevent or relieve homelessness in concert with the applicant.

7.4. As noted previously, the HRA made no substantive change to the acceptance criteria for the main housing duty. Despite this, in 2019/20 we are currently projecting 840 acceptances, which will be a 21% increase from the number of acceptances in 18/19 (690 acceptances).

Homelessness Prevention and Relief

7.5. To date this year the service has prevented or relieved homelessness for 850 households, with a year projection of 911 preventions and reliefs. This will be a 59% increase compared to 18/19. This has been an area of success for Lewisham - we are now preventing more homelessness than before. Over 61% of all preventions and reliefs since the introduction of the act have been single households. In line with London's experience, a number of households (782) were worked with through the prevention stage, relief stage or both but no longer required assistance following the statutory period ending.

7.6. The PRS forms a crucial and growing part of the council's offer to households that are threatened with homelessness or have become homeless. The service sources and offers good quality PRS accommodation to households that are threatened with homelessness or placed into temporary accommodation. This is offered in line with our locational priority policy to enable households to move into stable accommodation within the PRS.

7.7. In 2019/20 to date 158 homeless households have been re-settled into the private rented sector. The service is committed to supporting as many households as possible into settled accommodation that provides stability and security.

Working practices and administration

7.8. Assessments now take twice as long as they did previously. This is a consequence of:

- increased data gathering required under the act,
- a change in the way the service operates to support collaborative conversations and an in depth personalised plan
- and a more proactive service.

7.9. As experienced by Local Authorities across London, the HRA has increased the administrative burden on the service. Officers estimate that around a fifth of their case

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work time is taken up accurately completing the data returns required by central government.

8. How the service has responded to the Homelessness Reduction Act

Recruitment and resourcing

- 8.1. In line with the experience across London, Lewisham has had to recruit additional staff to respond to the HRA. Eight new additional Housing Solutions Officers have been recruited to manage the increase in caseloads and demand on the service and two new support officer roles were created to relieve some of the administrative burden.
- 8.2. A team of mediation officers have been embedded to the service to focus on prevention work, to keep applicants in their homes where possible. The mediators have successfully assisted 41 households to remain in their home by providing floating support, debt advice and negotiation with both landlords and family members.
- 8.3. The Housing Needs service is expanding on these successes by developing more specialist roles across the team where required. These roles will provide intensive support, tenancy training and resettlement for more vulnerable households.
- 8.4. In line with the London wide experience the service finds it challenging to recruit to the vacancies within the service. In response to this, three Trainee Housing Assistants have also been recruited. These roles give the opportunity for Lewisham residents to gain experience, knowledge and training in the housing sector and to enable us to train and grow new officers.

Expanding our prevention initiatives

- 8.5. The service has developed several new prevention offers, to assist both families and single applicants.
- 8.6. The council uses Homefinders UK, a social housing mobility scheme which supports homeless households into social housing across the UK. 68 households have moved through the scheme; of these 50 were single applicants.
- 8.7. Single applicants have access to a landlord incentive to find affordable accommodation which will enable them to move forward with their lives. The payment goes towards the deposit and first months rent of accommodation. The deposits are kept in a protected scheme so that applicants can use the money again, should for any reason, they be asked to leave.
- 8.8. The service has been running weekly 'find a home' workshops since January 2020. These are run in conjunction with the resettlement service. These workshops provide single applicants and families with the skills and confidence to look for their own properties. To promote better outcomes, the workshops operate in a relaxed and supportive setting at Catford library. These workshops operate from Catford library in a comfortable environment. To date 40 applicants have attended, 15 have been supported to find viewings on the day of the workshop and 5 have now signed up to new tenancies.
- 8.9. Funding has been secured from both the GLA and MHCLG to establish a department specialising in working with rough sleepers. The Rough Sleepers Initiative works in conjunction with other partners across the borough including the 999 club to prevent rough sleeping by providing intensive wrap round support and linking individuals to services or resettlement options which match their needs. So far nearly 50 households have been supported by the team, the majority of which have been provided with accommodation.

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- 8.10. The service continues to develop a range of prevention approaches, and is currently focussing on more tightly defining a landlord offer to help keep families within their current PRS tenancy.

Partnership Working and Duty to Refer

- 8.11. Work has been carried out by the Housing Needs service to improve partnership working throughout the borough.
- 8.12. Workshops with key partners including the DWP, hospitals and probation have helped ensure referrals are appropriate. Over 300 referrals have been received and the service has accepted a prevention or relief duty for 222 households; of these 71 (32%) have been supported to find new accommodation or to remain where they are.
- 8.13. Joint working protocols with the credit union have secured the homes over 60 households in the last financial year, through loans to clear rent arrears and the provision of budgeting, benefits and money advice.
- 8.14. The housing benefit team have supported 40 households since June 2018 to sustain their tenancies by administering backdated payments and negotiating with landlords. They have also administered DHP payments for short periods whilst supporting applicants to secure their homes.
- 8.15. A weekly advice service is held at Lewisham probation offices. Officers carry out assessments and link applicants into different housing options suitable for their circumstances. This mitigates the need for applicants to attend the offices, and the assessments can be carried out in a fully risk managed area. We are exploring opportunities to expand our co-located services, including with the South London Women's hub and physical and mental health in-patient services.
- 8.16. An employment project has been set up with the JobCentre to support households to find employment or training opportunities. This project has supported over 70 households into employment or training; of these 40 were benefit capped and previously in receipt of a discretionary housing payment (DHP). These clients are now able to independently pay their rent, and the DHP saving is being used to assist other households at risk of homelessness.
- 8.17. Lewisham's DWP Homeless Outreach Adviser provides advice and assistance to benefit claimants at risk of homelessness every fortnight at Laurence House. Eight of these surgeries have taken place and the adviser has helped 23 applicants with their benefit claims and employment issues.

Culture Change and Staff Development

- 8.18. A large culture change programme has embedded coaching and motivational interviewing techniques across the housing needs team. Officers hold collaborative conversations with clients, carrying out strength based assessments which inform the types of steps included in the personalised housing plans. These kinds of positive interactions are integral to the assessment process.
- 8.19. Officers have benefited from an extensive training package including courses around homelessness legislation, decision making, interview techniques and casework management. Manager and expert led workshops are held with staff to further instil confidence around decision making and case handling.
- 8.20. A peer review process involving a neighbouring borough is currently underway. This review will identify areas where improvements can be made to processes, ensuring every opportunity to prevent or relieve homelessness is taken.
- 8.21. As a trailblazer borough, Lewisham received additional funding to trial various approaches to preventing and relieving homelessness. A number of the projects and initiatives described here were undertaken as part of that Trailblazer programme.

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9. Service improvement currently underway

Integrated Housing IT System

- 9.1. An integrated housing IT system has recently been procured to replace the two systems currently in use by supported housing, homelessness, allocations and lettings and procurement teams.
- 9.2. This system has been custom made to support the HRAct and is being configured to fully support housing services. It will achieve greater efficiencies, reduce duplication of data entry, improve the insight and understanding we have of our clients and provide far better capacity for self service through the use of an effective client portal.

Process review and improvement

- 9.3. Alongside the implementation of the new IT system, a programme of process review and improvement is taking place with the aim of reducing duplication, speeding up and streamlining processes.

Improving access to the service

- 9.4. A full review of customer access to the frontline service has been undertaken aiming to better deal with demand at the front door. Upwards of 200 clients per week attend the office to receive housing services. Households often have to wait a long time for advice or an assessment.
- 9.5. To remedy this, new processes and systems have been introduced, as well as the trialing of fast track, one step assessments to ensure that those who approach as homeless on the day, including victims of domestic violence, can be quickly linked into other support services.

Changes to the Customer Service Centre

- 9.6. The service has developed a key set of requirements for the renovation works of the access point at Laurence House. The aim is to create well thought out, functional areas for clients based on their needs and the tasks they are completing. Comfort, privacy, and security are key features to be included in the renovation plans. This will better utilise the new systems and processes to deliver a quality service for users, improved working environment for the team and greater efficiency.

10. Financial impact of the homelessness reduction act

- 10.1. Over £1bn is spent on Homelessness every year in the UK, of which over three quarters is spent on temporary accommodation.⁹
- 10.2. In 2017/18, London local authorities spent over £900 million assessing, assisting and accommodating homeless households. Some £200 million of this money came from their own general funds.
- 10.3. To date the government has only provided around £30 million for managing the new duties specifically resulting from the Act, through grants including Flexible Homeless Support Grant and New Burdens Funding. It's estimated that up to 2022/23 London boroughs will spend an additional £80 million to manage the increase in demand on their service, leaving boroughs to find £50 million from their own resources over the period to 2022/23.
- 10.4. There is no long-term clarity over grant funding beyond 2020/21.
- 10.5. The significant and detrimental shortfall between the funding provided by MHCLG and

⁹ <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Homelessness.pdf>

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expenditure is as a result of severe underestimations by MHCLG in their new burdens funding calculations. It is estimated that the cost to a London Local Authority of an acceptance is more than twice what MHCLG estimated (£9556 vs £4200), and the cost of a prevention / relief case is almost five times more (£2517 vs £530).

- 10.6. The funding settlement is based partially on these calculations which are not reflective of the actual costs of running a homelessness service in London, posing serious and negative implications for Local Authorities in London.
- 10.7. Between 2017/18 and 2019/20 Lewisham received £12m of FHSG from MHCLG, and £1.2m in new burdens funding. In 2020/21 a combined £4.25m of FHSG and homelessness reduction grant will be provided to Lewisham.
- 10.8. Whilst the ongoing provision of FHSG and the introduction of the homelessness reduction grant is welcome, the cost of providing a homelessness service in Lewisham has escalated rapidly in recent years as demand has remained high.
- 10.9. In 2018/19 the council spent £29m on homelessness, an increase of almost £4.5m compared to 2017/18. Furthermore, over £3.6m of the expenditure in 2018/19 could not be recouped, compared to £2.3m in 2017/18.
- 10.10. The use of expensive nightly paid accommodation is the main driver for this unrecoverable expenditure. The council has had to increase its use of such accommodation as demand for assistance has continued to outstrip the supply of alternative TA or permanent accommodation.
- 10.11. This is particularly challenging as the service is committed to delivering over £640k of savings in the use of nightly paid accommodation across 2019/20 and 2020/21.

11. Policy reviews to be undertaken by the service

- 11.1. The implementation of the HRA Act has highlighted the increasing and ongoing challenges that the service is facing as a consequence of increased demand and an ongoing reduction in supply of genuinely affordable housing and access to affordable and suitable PRS accommodation.
- 11.2. As a result, the council is committed to undertake a review of a number of crucial policies and frameworks that impact on how we respond to the current challenges:
- 11.3. *A review of the allocations policy:* the allocations policy was last fully reviewed in April 2017. A review will focus on priority banding definitions with a focus on overcrowding, and how the allocations policy works for victims of domestic violence.
- 11.4. *A review of the locational priority checklist and its operation:* the locational priority checklist was approved on 11th December 2015 by Mayor and Cabinet. It provides a framework with which placements to TA and discharges into the PRS will be made. This will be reviewed for its effectiveness and approach, including the following areas: a review of the use of travel time as a method of determining location of TA and discharge property; ensuring that criteria for remaining in borough is fully inclusive for those who are carers and are in receipt of care; ensuring that the policy is clear in how it relates to PRSO discharge.
- 11.5. More detail will be presented to Housing Select Committee and Mayor and Cabinet when the review has concluded.

12. Financial implications

- 12.1. This report asks Housing Select Committee members to note and provide comments on the update to the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act within Lewisham. The update includes a review of the impact and service response. As such, there are no direct financial implications arising from this report

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- 12.2. There are significant costs associated with housing generally, including managing the provision of council housing and providing services to those experiencing homelessness or the threat of homelessness. All of these are affected over time by the demand for housing. The budget report agreed in February each year, sets out the Capital and Revenue resources available for Housing services and provision on an annual basis.
- 12.3. As noted in this report, the authority is currently receiving FHSG and New Burdens funding which has been specifically allocated to administering the HRA Act.
- 12.4. The New Burdens funding has enabled the employment of additional officers to cope with the increased work load as a result of the introduction of the act. However, there is no long-term clarity over this funding, as currently there is no indication of funding beyond 2020/21.
- 12.5. It is unclear whether it is the intention of the government to continue to provide grant support and if so, at what rate, and for how long. If funding is not provided beyond 2020/21 there will be a significant impact on service delivery and the ability of the service to remain within allocated budgets.

13. Legal implications

- 13.1. This report provides an update to Housing Select Committee following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) in April 2018. The main duties imposed by the Homelessness Reduction Act are laid out in section 4 of this report. There are no further legal implications arising from this report.

14. Equalities implications

- 14.1. There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.
- 14.2. Whilst there are no direct implications, the provisions of the homelessness reduction act seek to increase access to robust housing support for all eligible applicants. As such all households benefit from the increased access to services that the act provisions for.
- 14.3. This is particularly the case for single households not in priority need, who are entitled to a more comprehensive service as a consequence of the act.

15. Climate change and environmental implications

- 15.1. There are no direct climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

16. Crime and disorder implications

- 16.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

17. Health and wellbeing implications

- 17.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

18. Social value implications

- 18.1. There are no direct social value implications arising from this report.

19. Background papers

- 19.1. Housing select committee previously considered a report on this subject on the 17th December 2018. This report is available at the following link

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20. Glossary

20.1. The glossary below sets out the definition of some of the terms used in the above report.

Term	Definition
Assured Shorthold Tenancy	The most common form of tenancy in the private rented sector. An assured shorthold tenancy gives the tenant the right to occupy a property for a fixed period of time, provided that they keep to the terms of their tenancy agreement.
Main Housing Duty	The main housing duty is a duty to provide temporary accommodation until such time as the duty is ended
Personalised Housing Plan (PHP)	A plan tailored to the specific circumstances of the household. This sets out the actions that the household and the authority will take to prevent or relieve homelessness.
Prevention Duty	This is the legal requirement placed on authorities to work with eligible households that are threatened with homelessness within 56 days. The duty requires that the authority and the household take actions within this period to secure their existing accommodation or find alternative accommodation to prevent them becoming homeless.
Relief Duty	This is the legal requirement placed on authorities to work with eligible households that have become homeless for 56 days. During this period the authority and the household are required to be taking actions to source accommodation to enable the household to relieve their homelessness.
Temporary Accommodation (TA)	Accommodation that a household may be placed into whilst a decision is being made on their homelessness application, or after their application has been accepted.

21. Report author and contact

21.1. If you have any queries in relation to this report please contact Lee Georgiou at the following address Lee.Georgiou@lewisham.gov.uk.

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