



HOMELESS TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

**REPORT OF CHIEF OFFICER (HOUSING, COMMUNITY SAFETY
AND PARTNERSHIPS)**

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide members with information regarding the use of homeless temporary accommodation by the council.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 Members note the report.

3. **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide a homelessness service to homeless and potentially homeless people. This duty ranges from providing advice and assistance to prevent homelessness to taking a full homeless claim and potentially rehousing the person on a permanent basis.

- 3.2 Within this service there are a number of occasions when temporary accommodation has to be provided:

- Applicants are placed in temporary accommodation whilst their claim is looked at and a decision made. Whilst investigations may be completed quickly in some cases, increasingly people's circumstances are not straight forward and require more detailed investigation, which can prolong the time in temporary accommodation.
- If a full homeless duty is accepted there is a duty to provide accommodation until the applicant has been rehoused. Under the current Allocations policy, a homeless applicant has 8 weeks to place their bids. Once they are successful with a bid, there may be repairs to be made to the property or the property may be being built if it is a new affordable unit, so there can be a period of time before the applicant will move on.
- If an applicant has not been successful, for example if they have been found to be intentionally homeless or it has been established they are not vulnerable under the legislation, then temporary accommodation will be provided for a "reasonable period." This can be between 7 to 56 days. In cases where there are children 28 days is usual. In other cases, 14 days is usual. Other advice and assistance is provided in order to assist the applicant to move on and to avoid becoming street homeless.

- 3.3 There are occasions when applicants for whom no duty is owed are provided with temporary accommodation. These occasions include:

- Placements under the No Second Night Out Pathway. If an applicant approaches as homeless that day and they have not used the service before, then they will be placed in accommodation until the next working day to give them an opportunity to source a hostel or to reconnect with family or friends.

- Severe Weather Provisions where an applicant can be placed if they are of no fixed abode if the temperature is zero or below for 3 consecutive nights. Hinckley and Bosworth take a pragmatic approach to this and also apply it to severe rain and storms.
- We may also have occasions where we work with other agencies and although an applicant may not have a duty under the legislation, there may be public protection issues to consider. This is known as MAPPA – Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements.
- Discretionary provision. (Appendix 1 Case study 1)

4 **TYPES OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION.**

4.1 Temporary accommodation can be provided in a variety of ways.

- A hostel can be secured for families or for single people and they may provide support around a range of issues. Other hostels provide accommodation only and signpost for support.
- The council has a family hostel where the majority of homeless families are accommodated. Usage of the hostel has dramatically reduce over recent years.
- There are Women’s refuges for women fleeing domestic violence or abuse.
- Bed and breakfast is used, mainly for single applicants. There is a shortage of hostel accommodation for single people which leaves no alternative but to accommodate single people in B and B. At times families are placed into bed and breakfast accommodation. Before placing a family in the hostel a risk assessment has to be completed and we are unable to place anyone who has sexual offences, a history of extreme violence (case study 2) or arson, although every case is looked at individually. Sometimes, it is not safe to place a family in the hostel due to the location being well known in the area if there is a risk of harm.
- Accommodation can be provided in the Councils own stock (Case study 3) or in a private tenancy (Case study 4).

5. **Numbers in temporary accommodation.**

5.1 The numbers of people in B and B rose from a total of 30 in 2012/13 to 59 in 2013/14. Appendix 2 shows the reasons why people were accommodated in B and B. The biggest increase was in people accommodated through the No Second Night Out requirements. Typically accommodating under these provision is for one night only.

5.2 Whilst the number of people in B and B rose by 50%, the cost rose by only £2,242 from £34,782 in 2011/13 to £37,024 in 2013/14. This is due to the fact that the majority of the additional numbers accommodated through No Second Night Out were only accommodated for one night and therefore there is limited impact on the budget.

5.3 Income is received to offset the cost of B and B.

| | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| Housing benefit | 11,822 | 8793 |
| Individual contributions | 313 | 276 |

Families accommodated in the hostel pay a weekly charge, with housing benefit being awarded if the applicant is eligible.

5.2 The number of families in our family hostel rose from a total of 25 in 2012/13 to 31 in 2013/14.

5.3 The performance indicator NI156 measures the numbers in temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter and is therefore a snapshot of one day. The end of year report shows the numbers in temporary accommodation on 31st March. Performance was above target in 2013/14 (target 10):

| Year | Numbers in temp | Detail |
|----------|-----------------|---|
| 31/03/13 | 5 | 3 in hostel, 1 b and B and 1 women's refuge |
| 31/03/14 | 18 | 9 in hostel, 3 refuge, 5 in B and B, 1 other. |

6 Reasons for the increased use of temporary accommodation.

6.1 There are a number of reasons for this increase:

- Introduction of No Second Night Out.
- Increased number of Leaving Care cases.
- Closure of Ashcroft house, a mental health hostel, resulting in people with mental health issues being accommodated who previously would have been referred.
- The main reason for applicants making a full homeless claim is due to being asked to leave from private rented accommodation. In particular this accounts for the increased number of family applicants.
- Numbers accessing the Housing Options service have increased over a number of years. Whilst the numbers of claims have fallen from 212 in 2004 /5 to 153 in 2013/14, the number of people receiving advice and assistance has tripled from 203 in 2004 /5 to 808 in 2013 /14, and peaked at the height of the economic crisis at 1118 in 2012/13.
- The records on number of homelessness preventions started in 2006 /7 where 143 cases of homelessness were prevented and rose to its highest level of 618 in 2013/14. Cases that we are working with to prevent homelessness may be placed in temporary accommodation for short periods whilst alternative accommodation is found. Whilst this will show as an increase in numbers, the longer term costs in terms of taking a homeless claim, accommodating for a temporary period for longer and permanently rehousing would be higher if this approach was not taken.
- Increasingly customers who the Housing Options team are dealing with have complex, multiple needs which take longer to investigate and resolve. Applicants often lack the resilience to find accommodation for themselves and therefore discretion is used in the use of temporary accommodation to mitigate the harm which could be arise from an applicant rough sleeping or going into inadequate accommodation whilst longer term accommodation is found.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (KP)

4.1 As outlined below, the cost of providing prevention bonds and temporary accommodation in 2013/2014 was £102,595. In order to fund an element of this, the Council is allocated circa £50,000 within the annual finance settlement. In addition to this, housing benefit and bond repayments are receipted and reinvested back into the service to fund future costs.

| | Budget | Actual | Variance (over)/ underspend |
|--|---------------|---------------|--|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Expenditure (prevention bonds and temporary accommodation) | 105,124 | 102,595 | 2,529 |
| Income: | | | |
| Housing Benefit | -12,000 | -8,793 | -3,207 |
| Bond Repayments | -15,000 | -10,741 | -4,259 |
| Government Grant | -50,004 | -50,688 | 684 |

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [EH]

5.1 The report is for noting therefore there are no legal implications arising from the report, however the statutory obligation upon the Council to house are detailed within the body of the report.

6. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- Supporting Individuals.
- Providing Value for money and pro active services.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 None required.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1

| Management of significant (Net Red) Risks | | |
|---|--|---------------|
| Risk Description | Mitigating actions | Owner |
| Demand for services continues to rise resulting in insufficient budget to meet cost of temporary accommodation. | Demand and Costs kept under review on a monthly basis. | Sharon Stacey |

9. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

The Housing Options service has operated rural surgeries to enable people to access advise when needed and will also carry out home visits. The prevention ethos of the service enables officers to seek solutions to applicants individual circumstances within their local communities where ever possible.

Homelessness legislation ensures equality issues are considered and acted on appropriately in all advice and assistance given.

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications

- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning Implications
- Voluntary Sector

Contact Officer: Sharon Stacey
Executive Member: Michael Mullaney

Appendix 1

Case study 1

The applicant had suffered a relationship breakdown, his parents would not have him to stay due to issues with alcohol and he was placed in B&B. A placement was found for him but this was not going to be available for a further week. Discretion was used to move this gentleman on to a place of support and to provide temporary accommodation to avoid street homelessness even though there was not a statutory duty.

Case study 2

An applicant, his partner and his family who had been served a Section 21 notice from their private accommodation through no fault of their own were unable to stay in the hostel as the applicant had a history of ABH, GBH and was described by his psychiatrist as a sociopath, meaning that the risk to other families was too high. This did not relate to losing his home in any way so he could not be found to be intentionally homeless. There was also a potential diagnosis of schizophrenia.

Case study 3

Mr C's children were taken into care. He asked to be assessed for parenting responsibility. CYPS asked that they be placed with their father in accommodation so he could be observed with them. The judge ruled that they could not go into a hostel as he believed they had already suffered. In order to assist CYPS with their duties, a property was identified and Mr C was placed on a license until a decision was made if the children would reside with him on a permanent basis. This has now been awarded and he is bidding for properties.

Case study 4

Mr D is a paranoid schizophrenic who approached following a planned discharge from hospital. His father lived in our area but was not able to accommodate. Originally, B&B was going to be arranged but the psychiatrist felt that this would impede the progress made and isolation may have an effect on recovery. There was not a mental health supported hostel available, therefore an Assured shorthold tenancy was found and this was used as temporary accommodation. The Housing Options team paid the rent 6 months up front and arranged to have the Housing Benefit paid directly back to them.

Appendix 2

| Reason for B and B accommodation | 2012/13 | 2014/14 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Mental health (including paranoid schizophrenics) | 7 | 10 |
| No second night out | 4 | 20 |
| Leaving Care | 6 | 8 |
| Public protection | | 1 |
| Evicted from refuge | | 2 |
| Domestic abuse | 4 | 4 |
| Aged 16/17 | 2 | 2 |
| Institutionalised | | 2 |
| Physical disability | | 2 |
| Family (high risk) | 1 | 1 |
| MAPPAs | | 1 |
| Out of hours | 1 | 1 |
| Emergency | 2 | |
| Elderly | | 1 |
| Social services assessment | | 1 |
| Repairs decant | | 1 |
| Rough sleeper | | 1 |
| Pregnant | 3 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 30 | 59 |