

# Homeless Presentation

20th December 2016  
For Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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# Statutory Homelessness; Statutory Duties

There are 5 basic test of homelessness;

- Homelessness or threatened with homeless (within 28 days), Eligible for assistance, Priority Need, Intentionally Homeless, Local Connection

Priority Need Categories ;

- Pregnant Women, Dependent Children, Vulnerable person due to physical or mental illness, Special factors e.g. special needs, sexual orientation, violence/harassment & Emergency
  - Fire, flood or disaster - plus Extended categories: Priority Need Order 2002 e.g. armed forces, abuse etc.

Housing Advice and assistance ;

Provides housing options to prevent homelessness, benefit advice, signposting to other agencies, advice on tenant rights, landlord obligations etc

## Statutory Homelessness; Statistics

'Footfall' into My Council for Demand Team;

-April 2015 - March 2016 monthly avg. Advice = 80.25

Homelessness = 117.5

-March 2106 - November 2016 monthly avg. Advice = 82.88

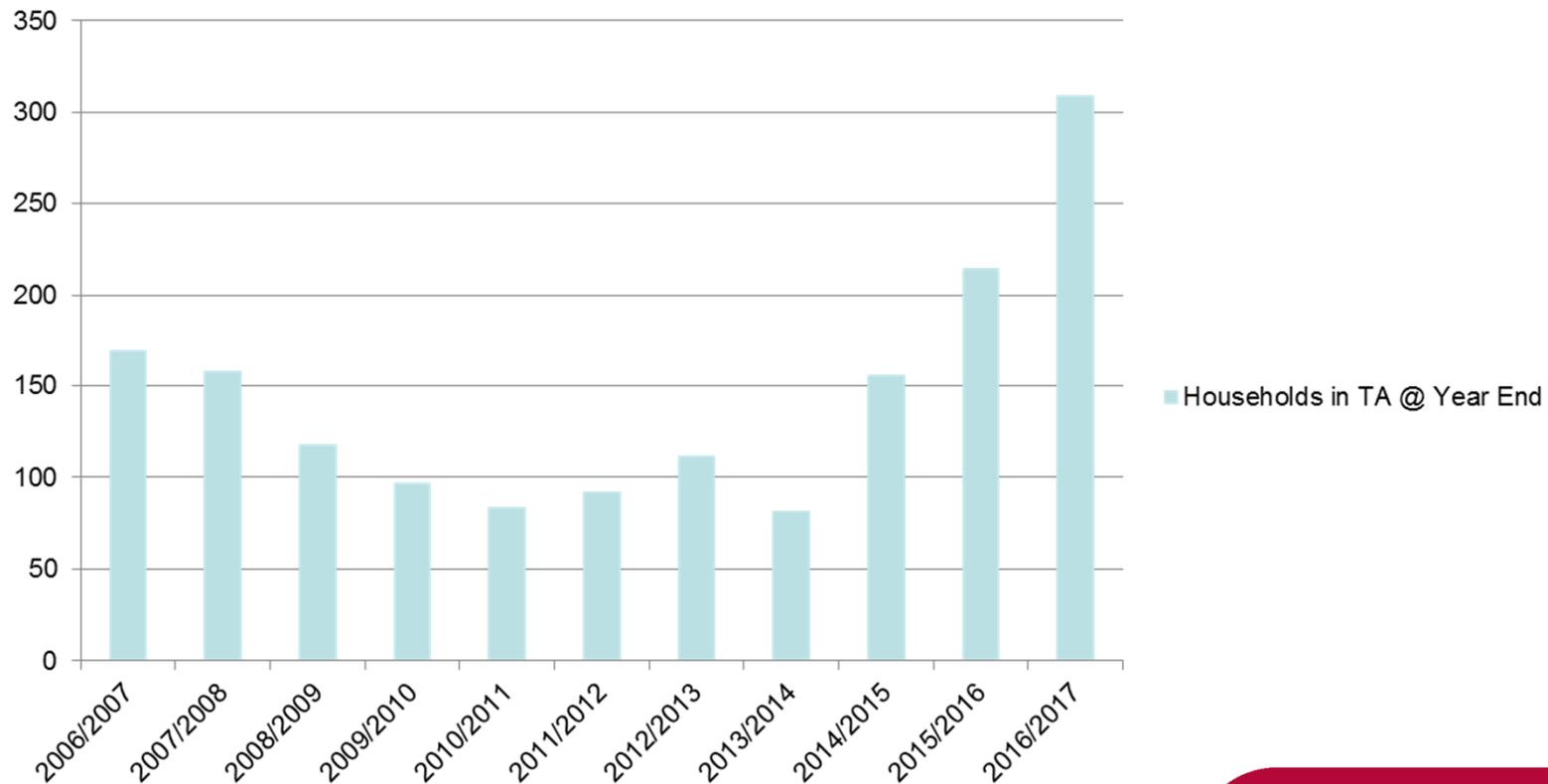
Homelessness = 116 (Jan-March are usually the busiest months)

'Agreed' homeless decisions issued; 2011-2012 = 82, 2012-2013 = 118, 2013- 2014 = 86, 2014 -2015 = 234 2015 -2016 = 245

End of AST, reason for homelessness; 2011-2012 = 17, 2012-2013 = 24, 2013 -2014 = 49, 2014 -2015 = 152, 2015 -2016 = 147

# Temporary Accommodation ; Statistics

## Households in Temporary Accommodation



## Temporary Accommodation (TA): Policy & Developments

- **Out of Borough Placement Policy** **March 2015**
- **Daily Charges** **April 2016**
- **No Families in Bed & Breakfast** **March 2017**
- **Improve the quality of accommodation** **Ongoing**
- **Assist those affected by the Benefit Cap** **Ongoing**
- **Maximising Income by allocating affordable Temporary Accommodation and maximising Housing Benefit recovery** **Ongoing**
- **Reduce Expenditure by reducing TA spot Purchasing** **Ongoing**
- **Converting HRA TA properties to GF where charges can be increased**
- **Purchasing our own TA, 81-83 High Street, Langley**

## Single Homeless & Rough Sleepers

- Official Rough Sleeper estimates for Slough - 2011 =30 2012 =8  
2013 =7 2014 =14 2015 =17 2016 =25
- Slough Homeless meetings - set up by Vicky Album from 'The Passage', a project which has been funded January 2015/17 by the Single Homeless Berkshire Group, which Slough chair (Julie Render)
- We have recently built strong links with Slough and London Soup Run, in relation to assisting Slough Borough Council to provide a night shelter between 29<sup>th</sup> December until end March 2017. Some of the Demand Team officers will be attending once a week in the evening to provide Housing Advice and we are seeking support from Tier 2, Mental Health, Health services, SAFFA etc, to also attend these sessions to support clients and the voluntary sector.

## Single Homeless & Rough Sleepers, Cont.

- With the assistance of Vicky Album, we have secured 20 places at the 'Crisis for Christmas' event to support rough sleepers over the Festive period, 22<sup>nd</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> December 2016
- The Housing Demand Team, along with other Berkshire Boroughs, have agreed to hold a MEAM (Making every adult Matter) event, presented by Homelesslink, in January 2017. This will involve getting our partners together, from statutory and voluntary sectors, to map what we have/do not have, why people in Slough are falling through the cracks, e.g. failing tenancies and so on.
- We have, along with Reading Borough Council & West Berkshire Council put in a 'Trailblazer' bid for Government money, re. prevention funding for single people. The outcome of this will be known in December 2016.

## Single Homeless & Rough Sleepers, Cont.

### Current supported housing provision in Slough;

- 20 beds Millennium House, 45 beds YMCA, 23 beds Hartland Close, 18 beds Slough Hostel = 106. All supported housing and floating support contracts are currently under review, via the Housing Related Strategic Board, which Housing Services attend and participate.
- We have just commissioned a small (7 bed) unit, with intense floating support, for single homeless people who do not meet the 'priority need' category but who have support needs and are 'homeless'. The intention is to use this as a fairly short term housing solution, then move tenants on into properties via the private sector.
- The new Housing Strategy once agreed, will allow the Homeless Strategy to be written and provide strategic focus for Slough Borough Council

## Hidden Homelessness & Sofa Surfing

- Sofa Surfing - meaning - 'staying with a series of different friends or relatives, sleeping, for example, on their sofa, because you do not have your own place where you can stay'
- There is an issue in Slough, as in the rest of the UK, regarding sofa surfing, which is often hidden, as people do not come into contact with local authorities or other support agencies, making it extremely difficult to assess the needs and levels, of this group.
- Hidden homelessness or sofa surfing can also apply to people who are in full time employment and have no identified issues, they are often 'in between' homes.

## Key Current Issues

### London placements into Slough- issues and impacts

Loss of availability to SBC and local people, of private rented properties due to large incentives being paid and pushing up monthly rents.

Impacts on Wexham Park Hospital, GP's, dentists, schools, Social Services, advice/support services etc.

Once placed into private rented properties (generally) after 6 months people become the responsibility of SBC, under homelessness legislation.

December 2015 – "The funding allocated to 22 boroughs (out of 25) recognised that London needs extra support. However, the funding of up to £200,000 per borough is significant, but not enough to make a real impact on homelessness that is needed".

Slough is facing the same issues, without extra these resources/funding

## Key Current Issues - Cont.

- Government data indicates that homelessness in London is increasing. The rate of homeless acceptances has increased by 80% in the four years since to 2013/14, while in the North of England there has been a decline of 14%, highlighting stark regional differences. The Homelessness Monitor: England 2015, February 2015, Crisis
- Rough sleeping and single homelessness - Slough has a specific issue with EEA National Rough Sleepers, who often work 'cash in hand' and therefore 'not exercising their treaty rights' in the UK, we do have access to a repatriation service but this offer is very rarely taken up.
- New 'vulnerability' assessments are now undertaken on all 'single people' applying as homelessness, after the recent end of the 'Pereira' Test

## Key Current Issues - Cont.

- Welfare benefits and the effect of sanctions on homelessness  
30th November 2016 'Crisis' said: "We know from our own research that benefit sanctions are a cause of homelessness and have a significant impact on vulnerable people - including those who are already homeless, care leavers and people with mental ill health."
- Demand for social housing outstrips supply, with 2223 households currently on the waiting list and only a limited number of council and housing association properties available each year.
- The current allocations policy gives as additional preference to applicants who contribute positively to the local area. An equality impact assessment is currently underway with a full review of the scheme to follow in the New Year.

## Key Current Issues - Cont.

- There are 163 homeless households on the housing register in the following bands:
  - Band A - 2
  - Band B - 50
  - Band C - 111
- Applicants who do not qualify to be on the register may include those who have not lived in Slough for five years, have been placed in Slough by another borough, have housing related debt/unacceptable behaviour or have income of savings above a set threshold.