

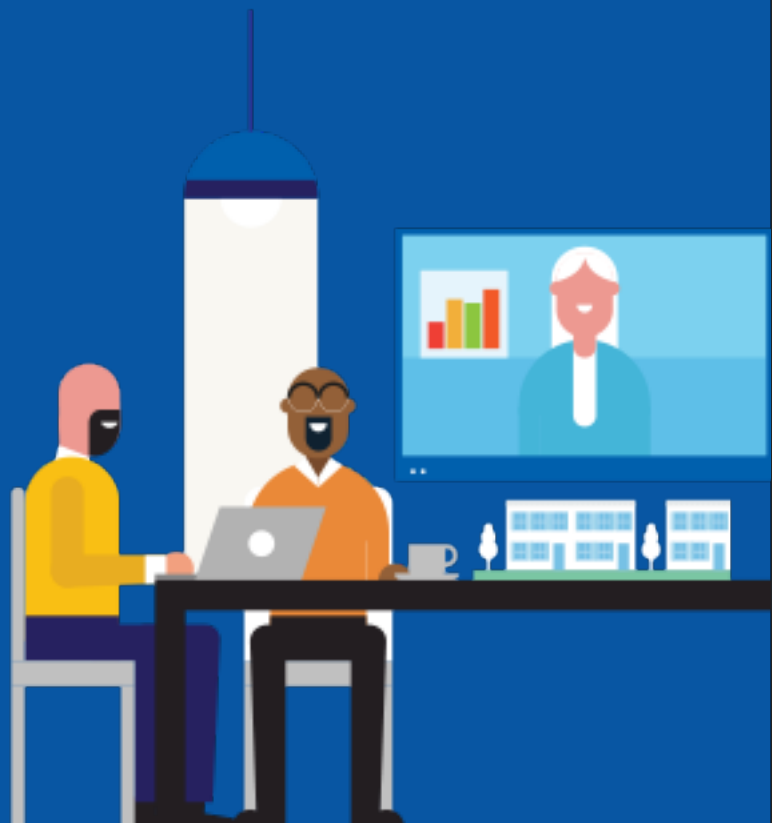
CAMPBELL  
TICKELL



*Knowsley Council*

# Homelessness Review

March 2025



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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The annual H-CLIC data for 2021/22 through to 2023/24 was used to examine trends in statutory homelessness over the three-year period. This was supplemented by MainStay data which has provided more detail on single homelessness. To assess rough sleeping we have examined the MHCLG's data on rough sleeping collected through annual snapshots and monthly data gathered via the data-led framework. Key information on Knowsley's homelessness and rough sleeping for 2023/24:

### Assessments

**1,147** households were assessed as owed either a prevention or relief duty in 2023/24

**482**  
prevention

**665**  
relief

*Duty type breakdown*

### Accommodation Outcomes

**553** households secured accommodation for 6+ months.

**244**  
prevention

**309**  
relief

*Duty type breakdown*

### Main Duties

**263** households were owed a main duty, meaning they were in priority need.

**231** households; **88%** of closed main duty cases ended with the household in accommodation.



### Temporary accommodation



In 2023/2024, the net usage of Temporary accommodation per week reached **88**, up from **50** in 2020/21

### Rough Sleeping

As at September 2024, around **13** individuals sleep rough in Knowsley over the course of each month



## **Rate of Statutory Homelessness in Knowsley<sup>1</sup>**

- 1.2 In 2023/24, 1,147 households were assessed as statutorily homeless, equating to a rate of 17.7 per 1,000 households<sup>2</sup>, a 4% increase from 2021/22.
- 1.3 The local rate of homelessness is higher than the national average and in the median range among five comparator authorities, though its increase has been slower than most neighbours.
- 1.4 A rising proportion of cases involve relief duty (58% in 2023/24 compared to 37% in 2021/22), suggesting more households are presenting later in their homelessness journey or prevention efforts are less effective.
- 1.5 Main Duty Assessments increased from 1.9 per 1,000 households in 2021/22 to 5.8 in 2023/24, the steepest rise among comparator authorities. This reflects a growing number of households with priority needs<sup>3</sup> where it has not been possible to resolve their homelessness within 56 days and who are becoming homeless. Of these, 68% of households include dependent children (up from 31% in 2021/22).

## **Causes of Homelessness<sup>4</sup>**

- 1.6 Loss of private rented tenancy is now the leading cause of prevention duty cases, increasing 19% since 2021/22. For relief duties, family/friends unwilling to accommodate remains the top reason.
- 1.7 There was a significant increase in homelessness among households leaving asylum seeker accommodation and owed a prevention or relief duty. This rose from 7% of all relief cases in 2022/23 to 33% in 2023/24 among all other reasons for loss of accommodation. Prevention duty cases climbed from 3% in 2021/22 to 14% in 2023/24. This trend, combined with a slight rise in evictions from social tenancies during the same period (17% to 19% for prevention duty cases and 10% to 13% for relief duty cases), highlights some of the challenges for the council.

## **Prevention and Relief Duty Outcomes<sup>5</sup>**

- 1.8 Prevention outcomes resulting in secure accommodation fell 14% from 2021/22 to 2023/24, while cases ending in homelessness rose 20% over the same period, showing declining prevention effectiveness. This trend is reflected nationally.
- 1.9 Relief duty outcomes show stronger performance locally (38% success rate) than national (34%) or neighbour (35%) averages.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on latest figures from published HCLIC dataset

<sup>2</sup> Household numbers are based on the 2018 ONS population projections

<sup>3</sup> Priority needs which fall under Main Duty include: households with dependent children or pregnant women; people who are vulnerable due to mental illness, physical disability or other reasons; people who are vulnerable due to time spent in care, custody or in HM Forces; and, people who are vulnerable due to fleeing their home because of violence or the threat of violence.

<sup>4</sup> Based on latest figures from published H-CLIC dataset

<sup>5</sup> Based on latest figures from published H-CLIC dataset

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- 1.10 Reliance on social rented housing for resolving relief duty cases has grown (75% of outcomes), while outcomes in supported housing have declined from 21% in 2021/22 to 13% in 23/24 (see 5.18-5.20 below) suggesting either reduced utilisation or availability of supported accommodation for vulnerable clients.

### **Demographics<sup>6</sup>**

- 1.11 Younger households and those from ‘other ethnic groups’ are disproportionately affected, with homelessness rising for minority ethnic groups, this is possibly due to the increase in asylum seekers who have been given leave to remain by the Home Office in 2023/24.
- 1.12 Single households make up 58% of prevention cases and 70% of relief cases, despite being only 30% of the overall local population as per the 2021 census.
- 1.13 Mental health issues remain the most common support need, affecting 32% of households owed a duty.
- 1.14 Growth in ‘other support needs’ (such as access to education, employment or training and difficulties budgeting) to 12% of all homeless duty cases suggests new or underexplored factors contributing to homelessness and require further investigation.

### **Clients with Support Needs**

- 1.15 In addition to the H-CLIC data on vulnerable households, we have analysed data held for Knowsley on the Liverpool City Region’s MainStay data system (for commissioned single homeless accommodation-based and floating support services). The cohort of clients assessed increased from 798 clients in 2021/22 to 942 clients assessed in 2023/24. The data shows a growing trend in individuals presenting with complex/multiple support needs.
- 1.16 Clients with two needs classed as “High” or “Very High” in particular areas (e.g. substance misuse, mental ill health, or offending) accounted for 22% of the cohort in 2021/22, and 21% in 2023/24 (200 people), whilst those with three or more “High” or “Very High” needs represent an *additional* 28% in 2021/22 and 29% (270 people) in 2023/24. This means that clients with complex needs account for between 47-50% of the overall cohort and exhibits a slight upward trend.
- 1.17 There has been a slight decrease in repeat presentations to services, falling from 37% in 2021/22 to 33% in 2023/24. This decline is matched by a rise in first presentations, from 39% to 43%. The shift indicates that more people are becoming homeless for the first time rather than repeat clients, though it could also indicate that services have improved at retaining individuals in support.
- 1.18 At the time of assessment, most clients were either in temporary accommodation (20-26%) or living with family or friends (29-34%). The trend suggests that many clients are in unstable living situations, before they move into supported accommodation.

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<sup>6</sup> Based on latest figures from published HCLIC dataset

- 1.19 A significant rise was seen in the number of clients previously living in asylum seeker accommodation, from 1% to 11%.
- 1.20 The client group remains predominantly male (61-74%) and White British (83-93%). The largest age group continues to be 25-34 years, followed by 16-24-year-olds. This demographic profile highlights the younger age of those experiencing homelessness.
- 1.21 There has been a decline in refusals by housing and support providers<sup>7</sup>, from 34% in 2021/22 to 24% in 2023/24. However, a growing proportion of refusals are attributed to high levels of risk or too high care and support needs, shifting from 12% of all refusals by the provider in 2021/22 to 44% of refusals by the provider in 2023/24, indicating that those with more complex issues are not being accepted for supported accommodation services.
- 1.22 The number of people moving to long term accommodation has remained steady at 50-51% of all those leaving the service<sup>8</sup>.
- 1.23 Unplanned exits have increased from 10% in 2021/22 to 14% in 2023/24, whilst exits for 'Other' reasons including death or the client's whereabouts being unknown<sup>9</sup> remain significant at 32%.
- 1.24 Floating support assessments have also increased significantly from 639 in 2021/22 to 781 in 2023/24, suggesting a greater demand and potentially reflecting a growing need for flexible, community-based assistance.

## **Rough Sleeping**

- 1.25 According to the Rough Sleeping annual snapshot data gathered by the MHCLG, of both the near neighbour comparator authorities and the LCRCA, Knowsley has consistently had one of the lowest rates of rough sleeping per 10,000 people, ranging from 0.0 to 2.1. Rough sleeping has been steady over time, with the lowest increases among its statistical neighbours and city region authorities.
- 1.26 However, the data-led framework, which captures snap shots monthly, shows a significant rise in the numbers rough sleeping over the course of a month in Knowsley; from 2.0 in October 2020 to 5.7 in August 2024. With sharp peaks in December 2023 and February 2024, the rolling 12-month average of rough sleepers in Knowsley over the course of a month was 13.
- 1.27 New rough sleepers over the course of a month have also increased from 1 in October 2020 to 9 in August 2024, with spikes of 16 in February and April 2024.

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<sup>7</sup> Housing providers included are Alt Bank House, Knowsley Supported Lodgings, Knowsley Supported Lodgings Crash Beds, S.H.A.P Octavia Court, S.H.A.P Shelagh Delaney House, S.H.A.P Westhead, The First Step Refuge, Yates Court

<sup>8</sup> Long term housing includes: Housed via Housing First, Renting privately owned accommodation, RSL Tenancy, Returned to previous home, went to independent housing, Rehoused RSL, went to Sheltered Housing, Moved into a care home, went to long-term supported housing, Moved into long term harm-reduction service, moved into shared accommodation.

<sup>9</sup> 'Other' reasons also include client moving to Crash Pad accommodation, but there is only one case of this in the data.

- 1.28 The rise in rough sleeping shown in the monthly figures is largely driven by individuals leaving asylum accommodation and those being discharged from institutions, with notable peaks in December 2023 and February 2024.

### **Views of People with Lived Experience of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping**

- 1.29 Seventeen people with lived experience of homelessness were consulted through on-site visits to Alt Bank hostel for single homeless people, Octavia Court, commissioned supported housing service for young people, and Yates Court homeless families' scheme.
- 1.30 Many suggestions for improving Knowsley's response to homelessness were made. There would appear to be some issues with the pathway from prison discharge, with some people talking about a lack of pre-release planning. People were positive about the service at Alt Bank and the additional input from Community Psychiatric services and the CGL substance misuse service. Some people acknowledged they would need ongoing support once they moved.
- 1.31 The young people at Octavia Court felt that in addition to just generally improving the supply of housing, there could be more advice and information available on issues such as the impact of temporary or part-time working on benefits and ability to afford rent and service charges, more targeted information on homelessness services to at risk demographics such as young people, and people wanted clearer information on Property Pool Plus.
- 1.32 Yates Court is the only commissioned scheme for homeless families in Knowsley and people interviewed commented on the number of other TA placements they experienced which for some people disrupted children's education. Some people also felt that Council services were not well-publicised and had experienced problems navigating information relating to homelessness on the Council's website. Although people had lived independently in previous tenancies, and felt they had few support needs, there was concern about buying furniture for a new tenancy and people felt mental health services were also difficult to access. It would also appear people need more robust financial management and budgeting skills training, to avoid falling into arrears and becoming homeless in future. Improvements suggested were to review and clarify council information to the website, provide good housing support in prisons and clarify Property Pool Plus bidding information.
- 1.33 In terms of move-on/throughput in services: almost all participants wished to live independently and considered they had the skills to do this – although some were concerned about managing tenancies on a very low income. Discussions highlighted most people wanted to remain close to family/friends and other networks, but that supply of suitable properties in these areas may not match this demand. Discussions also highlighted that some residents are not ready to move on because of their large rent and/or service charge arrears, relating to current and/or former tenancies. This is a barrier to landlords accepting people but also indicates that more needs to be done to support people with budgeting, money management and anti-poverty measures and to understand the importance of maintaining regular rent and service charge payments.

## Emerging themes and priorities for the strategy

- 1.34 There is an increasing challenge of achieving successful prevention outcomes and the need to address this through:
  - a) Exploring more early intervention approaches to homelessness prevention, including using the council's Early Intervention data and information available across the Council and its partners on families and individuals at risk of homelessness to better target interventions earlier.
  - b) Increasing awareness/accessibility of Knowsley's homelessness advice and support, as well as welfare benefits advice and impact on income; improving prison discharge and other accommodation pathways. I
  - c) Improving people's ability to manage their finances, to budget and to avoid accruing high arrears potentially through an enhanced floating support and/or RSI navigator service.
- 1.35 The increasing complexity of needs amongst single homeless people means there is a need for supported accommodation which can successfully support this group, to prevent repeat homelessness. A second hostel would provide more options for people and would allow the Council to vary the service offered to different cohorts of homeless and/or rough sleeping individuals.
- 1.36 Within the single homeless population there is a small cohort of people who are likely to need long-term support and/or care to meet their needs around physical and mental health and substance use through a harm minimisation focussed service. Existing extra care provision in Knowsley is not likely to be suitable for this group. Specialist accommodation and support might be provided within the proposed new second hostel, including care packages via Adult Social Care, as needed. The size of the current cohort and their support/care needs are well understood, as is the need for a harm minimisation approach. However, ongoing data collection would be needed to assess likely future demand for long-term support and/or care within the single homeless population in Knowsley. Analysis of MainStay data from 2020-2024 reveals that an increasing number of people are being refused by providers due to their high levels of risk, or care and support needs being too high. Numbers have increased from 34 individuals in 2020 to 53 individuals in 2023 (after a peak of 57 in 2023) who are deemed to present either high levels of risk or too high care and support needs.
- 1.37 There is also a growing cohort of people with low needs who are rough sleeping and who require rapid access to low support temporary and then longer-term stable accommodation. This has largely to date been those given leave to remain and who have had to leave asylum accommodation. The government has now extended the notice to leave hotels to 56 days, which should allow the Council to carry out more prevention work – though we understand that implementation of this change has not yet started. There will still however be a need for longer term low/no support accommodation for this cohort, if the trend in decisions continues.
- 1.38 Increasing rough sleeping means there is a need for a rapid response and to ensure access to emergency accommodation is sufficient to meet demand. This includes sufficient outreach



and sit up provision. Feedback from stakeholders would indicate that the provision could be increased from 3 to 10 units.

- 1.39 The need to address housing supply issues:
  - a) There is a clear need to increase the supply of affordable housing in areas of high demand (people's expressed preference areas, close to social and support networks).
  - b) There is a need to increase the supply of 1- and 2-bedroom accommodation and short-term shared accommodation for those who are homeless without or with low support needs.
- 1.40 The Renter's Reform Bill, which will eliminate S21 notices, provides an opportunity to revisit how to increase PRS accommodation access, opportunities to acquire PRS accommodation from exiting landlords and convert this to social housing, as well as working with all landlords, including social landlords, to reduce tenancy ends.
- 1.41 The Council should look at making the best use of existing housing supply, particularly work to bring more empty homes back into use through the issuing of empty dwelling management orders and work to ensure that where existing housing is not meeting decent homes requirements that action is taken to improve accommodation as a way to avoid people becoming homeless.
- 1.42 The need to make the best possible use of supported housing resources – this could mean looking to fast track people with lower needs through projects and into stable longer term move on accommodation with floating support where needed; reviewing how best to use supported exempt accommodation. It also includes increasing the amount of hostel accommodation available in Knowsley to enable a choice of service and different service pattern to be provided.
- 1.43 The increasing proportion of job seekers amongst those seeking homelessness support from the Council demonstrates the need to further increase employability support to homeless households and help access into jobs and to ensure that all people in temporary and supported accommodation have access to good quality information relating to welfare benefit entitlements when in employment. This is particularly important for young people, where skills and attainment are below the national average, and Knowsley has higher levels of persistent absence in schools and fewer children achieving English and Maths GCSEs than national and regional levels. Support to enter employment will have a significant impact on young people's life chances going forward and potentially reduce future risk of homelessness.
- 1.44 The Strategy should focus on three overall priorities:
  - a) increasing homelessness prevention and support to sustain housing
  - b) Providing the right support at the right time
  - c) increasing the supply of suitable and affordable housing for families and single households who are homeless or rough sleeping.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 This Homelessness Review is prepared in line with Chapter 2 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities and the Homelessness Act 2002. This sets out the requirements for the development of Homelessness Strategies.
- 2.2 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local housing authorities to carry out a homelessness review to provide an accurate portrayal of homelessness in their area. The purpose of a homelessness review is to assess the extent to which the population in the Borough is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and to identify what is currently being done, and identify what resources are available, to prevent and tackle homelessness.
- 2.3 There are a number of stages required for a homelessness review which are:
- Current and future levels of homelessness and rough sleeping
  - Activities for:
    - preventing homelessness and rough sleeping
    - Securing accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
    - Providing support for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, or were previously homeless
  - The resources available to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.
- 2.4 A homelessness review provides the evidence for the housing authorities to develop a homelessness strategy. The Homelessness Act 2002 requires housing authorities to publish a new homelessness strategy, based on the results of a further homelessness review, within 5 years of the publication of their last homelessness strategy.
- 2.5 This Homelessness Review brings together the data gathered through the review process. This includes an analysis of Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC) data, of data gathered from MainStay, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's data system for commissioned homelessness and single homeless services, and the Government's Rough Sleeping snapshot data. The data analysis has been supported by engagement with a range of stakeholders from Knowsley Council's whole life commissioning team, public health, and the council's statutory partners in health and probation, as well as service providers, landlords and people with lived experience of homelessness and rough sleeping. Feedback from all stakeholders is summarised in this review report, and a list of stakeholders consulted is set out in Appendix 1. Campbell Tickell has also examined a range of strategies and other documents; these are listed in Appendix 2.

## Definitions of homelessness and rough sleeping

- 2.6 The legal explanation of homelessness set out in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996<sup>10</sup> states, in summary, that a person is homeless if they have no accommodation available for his occupation, in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, which they are entitled to occupy.
- 2.7 The Act goes on to say, in summary, that a person is also homeless if they are unable to gain entry to accommodation they are entitled to occupy or if it is unreasonable for them to continue to occupy that accommodation. This could be because the accommodation is unfit to occupy or is unsafe, for example because of the threat of violence or domestic abuse.
- 2.8 A person is threatened with homelessness, according to the Act, if it is likely that they will become homeless within 56 days.
- 2.9 In order for the Council to owe a legal duty, a person also needs to be eligible for homelessness assistance. This depends on immigration and residence status. There are different rules for British and Irish nationals and people from abroad<sup>11</sup>.
- 2.10 Rough sleeping has a narrower definition. According to the government<sup>12</sup> rough sleepers are defined for the purposes of rough sleeping counts and estimates as:
- people sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments)
  - people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or ‘bashes’).
- 2.11 For the purposes of collection of data and publication of statistics, homelessness and rough sleeping are treated separately. Rough sleeping has been the focus of much of the government’s efforts and funding in recent years, with a still existing commitment to ‘End Rough Sleeping for Good’ set out in the national rough sleeping strategy published in 2022<sup>13</sup>.
- 2.12 However, it is the wider definition of being homeless or threatened with homelessness in the Housing Act 1996, which triggers legal duties as set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017<sup>14</sup> for a local authority to intervene to attempt to prevent homelessness if it is threatened within 56 days or to attempt to relieve homelessness which already exists.
- 2.13 Important changes introduced in the Homelessness Reduction Act from April 2018 include that the duties to attempt to prevent or relieve homelessness apply regardless of whether the household is in priority need due to vulnerability, and that local authorities are required to agree and record steps to be taken to prevent/relieve homelessness by the applicant and the Council in a Personal Housing Plan.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/52/part/VII>

<sup>11</sup> [https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/legal/homelessness\\_applications/eligibility\\_for\\_homelessness\\_assistance](https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/legal/homelessness_applications/eligibility_for_homelessness_assistance)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions>

<sup>13</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/631229d7e90e075882ea2566/20220903\\_Ending\\_rough\\_sleeping\\_for\\_good.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/631229d7e90e075882ea2566/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/contents>

- 2.14 Homelessness, or the threat of homelessness, which triggers a legal duty for local authorities is what is recorded in the statutory homelessness statistics.
- 2.15 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has required tier 1 authorities to carry out a needs assessment and put in place a Safe Accommodation Strategy and commission required provision for survivors of domestic abuse. This and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 have been the biggest changes in homelessness legislation in recent times.
- 2.16 In addition to statutory homelessness and rough sleeping, there is also 'hidden homelessness', where a person may be homeless but has not reported it to a local authority or been identified as sleeping rough. The figures for hidden homelessness, are by definition, hard to ascertain. However, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has acknowledged that this is a significant gap in the data<sup>15</sup> and states that: 'the available evidence suggests some population groups, such as women, young people and ethnic minority groups, are more likely to experience "hidden" homelessness than others.' The Crisis Homelessness Monitor 2023<sup>16</sup> modelling of homelessness projections proposed that homelessness would rise by 25% (from 2023 levels) by 2041 across England. The highest rises being in unsuitable Temporary Accommodation (TA – with the definition of unsuitable being B&B, nightly lets, out of area placements) and an absolute rise in sofa surfing of 28% by 2041.
- 2.17 It should be noted that the new Government has announced the creation of a multi-departmental homelessness task force and plans to launch a new homelessness approach that is focussed much more clearly on homelessness prevention. The Renters' Rights Act is aiming to end the use of Section 21 Notices (no fault evictions), and the Government has also announced that local connection will no longer apply to veterans, care experienced persons or to those escaping domestic violence. The Supported Housing (Oversight) Act 2023 consultation document (released February 2025) sets out the requirements for national standards in supported housing and proposals on the licencing of supported housing, which it proposes to make a condition of access to housing benefit at enhanced 'exempt' rates. All of these will have an impact on the council's approach to homelessness and rough sleeping.

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<sup>15</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/hiddenhomelessnessintheukvideoreview/2023-03-29>

<sup>16</sup>[https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/utehvxat/homelessness-monitor-england\\_report-2023\\_v11.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/utehvxat/homelessness-monitor-england_report-2023_v11.pdf)

### 3. Context for Knowsley

- 3.1 Knowsley's population in 2024 is around 157,000 and is predicted to grow by 5,000 by 2030. The working age population is expected to decline, and the older population is set to increase by 8,000 by 2030. While the overall working age population has stayed stable over the last 10 years, people aged 35 to 44 years old have left Knowsley (this population has declined by 25%). The proportional fall in people aged 35-44 years old is a trend also seen in national data, but the decline is greater in Knowsley. Knowsley's housing development plans have to date focussed on rebalancing the housing market and focussed on providing housing for a younger working age population.
- 3.2 The Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that Knowsley is the second most deprived borough in England. Labour supply data for 2023/24 indicates that 27.3% of the population is economically inactive as compared to 21% nationally and Knowsley has an unemployment rate of 4.8% as compared to the national rate of 3.7%. As of October 2024, 5% of those aged 16-64 were claiming out of work benefits this is slightly higher than the 4.7% in the Northwest and 4.3% nationally. Of the 25,500 people who are economically inactive 47.4% are long term sick, higher than the Northwest region of 32% and the national percentage of 28%<sup>17</sup>.
- 3.3 Knowsley has the highest proportion of its population living in income deprived households in England, equating to one in four of all households. Average gross disposable income in Knowsley is £17,260, as compared to the national average of £20,425 the gross median weekly pay however is £616, £12 more than the national median.
- 3.4 Over the last ten years children in Knowsley whose parents are in work but who are still in poverty has almost doubled, while children with lone working parents who are in poverty has increased by more than 200%. Knowsley has however made great efforts through Knowsley Works to provide employability support to residents, including those with mental health issues, and substance misuse.
- 3.5 Knowsley's healthy life expectancy for men and women is lower than the England average and overall life expectancy while improving is still lower than the England average. Life expectancy for men in Knowsley is 79.1 years, as compared to England where it is 82.5 years, for women life expectancy in Knowsley is 83.1 years while in England it is 86.5 years. Healthy life expectancy follows a similar pattern where for men and women in Knowsley it is 61 years, while for England it is 9 years higher at 69.7 for men and 70.8 for women. Knowsley was ranked in the bottom 10 percent of local authority areas in England for health in 2021. Adults in Knowsley are also more likely to suffer from or have experienced mental health issues. Knowsley's percentage of people in fuel poverty is, at 18.1%, this is 1% higher than the rest of the Northwest region and is the second highest in the Merseyside region, it is 2.1% higher than the England average.

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<sup>17</sup> [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics](#)

## Relevant Strategies

### Knowsley 2030

- 3.6 The Knowsley 2030 Strategy aims to achieve five outcomes, making Knowsley a place:
- where strong and safe communities can shape their future
  - where people are active and healthy, and have access to the support they need
  - where people of all ages are confident and can achieve their full potential
  - with a thriving, inclusive economy with opportunities for people and business
  - with welcoming, vibrant, well-connected neighbourhoods and town centres
- 3.7 This strategy is underpinned by the principle that more can be achieved by working together in partnership as groups, organisations and individuals. This principle is the focus of the Knowsley Better Together partnership approach and the Knowsley Offer which brings together a range of supports available to Knowsley residents, particularly those impacted by the cost-of-living increases.

### Knowsley Council Plan 2025-2030

- 3.8 The Vision for the new Council Plan is 'Supporting Knowsley Residents to Thrive'. The plan aims to:
- Deliver effective high-quality services and support that positively impact on the lives of Knowsley residents
  - Encourage growth that benefits everyone
  - Delivers targeted support to encourage fairness and opportunity.
- 3.9 To achieve these goals the plan is underpinned by the aim of identifying issues early and taking action before problems escalate; helping communities to find their own solutions; ensuring no one is left behind; and ensuring communities work together. The aim of delivering targeted support and encouraging fairness focusses on early intervention and prevention, tackling root causes of inequality and creating strong community networks. It also sets priorities for tackling poverty around working with resident to support their career aspirations and career development, as well as tackling attendance levels, in schools, improving prevention and early intervention with cases of domestic abuse, and act early to prevent young people at risk from criminality and exploitation from falling into serious and organised crime.

### Housing Strategy 2022 - 2027

- 3.10 The Knowsley Housing Strategy 2022-2027 has a vision 'to deliver a housing offer that meets the needs of existing residents and attracts economically active people to the Borough' and has the following priorities:
- Locally distinctive
  - Maintaining delivery, promoting choice and affordability
  - Extending opportunities for local people
  - Improving the quality of current homes and
  - Homes for all, promoting independent living.

- 3.11 The council has built 4,005 new homes and plans to build a further 4,000 units. The Council's ambition is that by 2030 Knowsley will be a place with diverse housing with different types and tenures. The Strategy focuses on place shaping in the main urban areas of Halewood, Huyton, Kirkby and Prescot, investing to build on local assets and make each area distinct.
- 3.12 The evidence base within the Housing Needs Assessment for Knowsley confirms a net shortfall of 178 affordable homes each year to 2027 with a split for 70% affordable rented and 30% affordable home ownership. The Housing Strategy recognises the need to create balanced communities and a diverse housing offer. The Strategy aims to establish a Housing Investment Fund that will be used to support the council's housing plans including the funding of temporary accommodation from the private sector, funding of projects that will assist vulnerable households to sustain their tenancies, in addition to the delivery of affordable housing in different tenures. The Housing Strategy also aims to improve the amount and quality of private rented housing available.

## Housing Market

- 3.13 Knowsley has 66,073 households with tenure broken down as follows:

Tenure - Households		
		%
<b>All households</b>	<b>66,073</b>	<b>100</b>
Owned: Owns outright	18,902	28.6
Owns with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership	20,927	31.7
Social rented	16,687	25.3
Private rented or lives rent free	9,557	14.5

Source: ONS - 2021 Census (TS054)

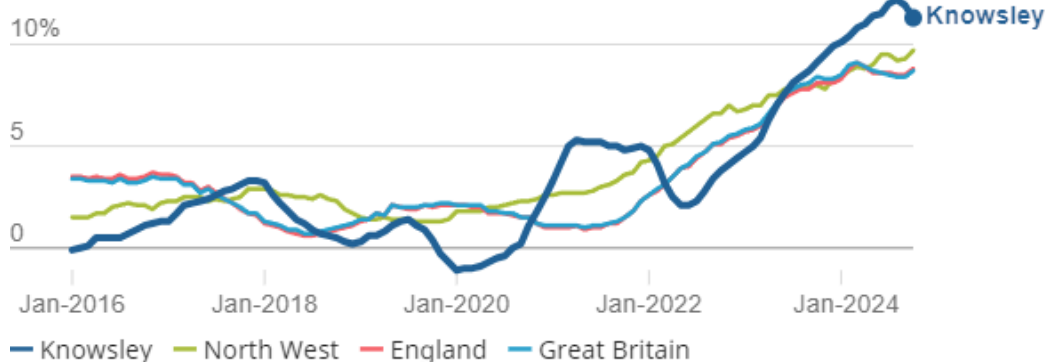
- 3.14 Just over 60% of Knowsley's households either own their homes outright or with a mortgage, social rented housing accounts for just over 25% of all households and a smaller 14.5% of households are in private rented accommodation. The 2021 Housing Needs Assessment for Knowsley<sup>18</sup> identified that there is an overall shortage of affordable housing particularly smaller 1- and 2- bedroom units for social/affordable rent and shared ownership across the board.
- 3.15 The 2021 Census identified that Knowsley's housing consists of 43% semi-detached housing, 32% terraced, 15% detached and 10% purpose-built flats or tenement. The number of bedrooms in a household consists of 6% 1 bedroom, 21% 2-bedroom accommodation, just over 56% 3 bedrooms, with just over 15% consisting of 4 or more bedrooms.

<sup>18</sup> [Knowsley Housing Needs Assessment 2021](#)

- 3.16 The average house price in Knowsley in 2024 was £185k which is a 4.1% increase on 2023, but well below the £282k average UK house price in 2024. The average monthly rent was £755 a month, an annual increase of 11.3% from 2023 prices, this was higher than the increase in the Northwest which was 9.7%. The average salary for Knowsley is £31,985. This means that the average rent represents 29% of the average annual salary. Knowsley's Housing Strategy 2022-27 identified 25% of gross household income being spent on rent as being the tipping point for housing affordability.

### Annual change in rents in Knowsley

Private rental price annual inflation, Knowsley, January 2016 to October 2024

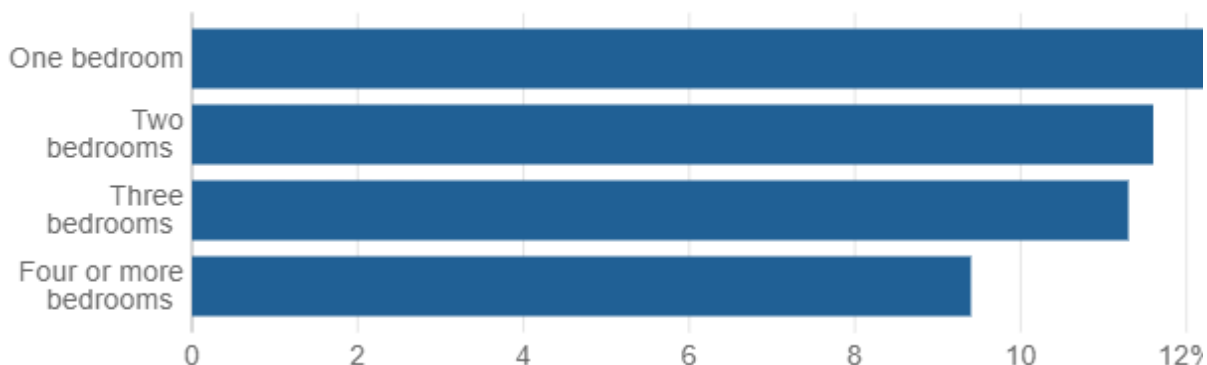


Source: Price Index of Private Rents from the Office for National Statistics

- 3.17 While average rents have increased, those for one and two bedrooms have increased the most:

### Change in average rents by bedroom number in Knowsley

Monthly private rental price, annual inflation, October 2024



Source: Price Index of Private Rents from the Office for National Statistics

- 3.18 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates in the UK determine the maximum amount of housing benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit that can be claimed for privately rented properties. These rates are set by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) and are based on the cost of renting in specific Broad Rental Market Areas (BRMAs). LHA rates are designed to



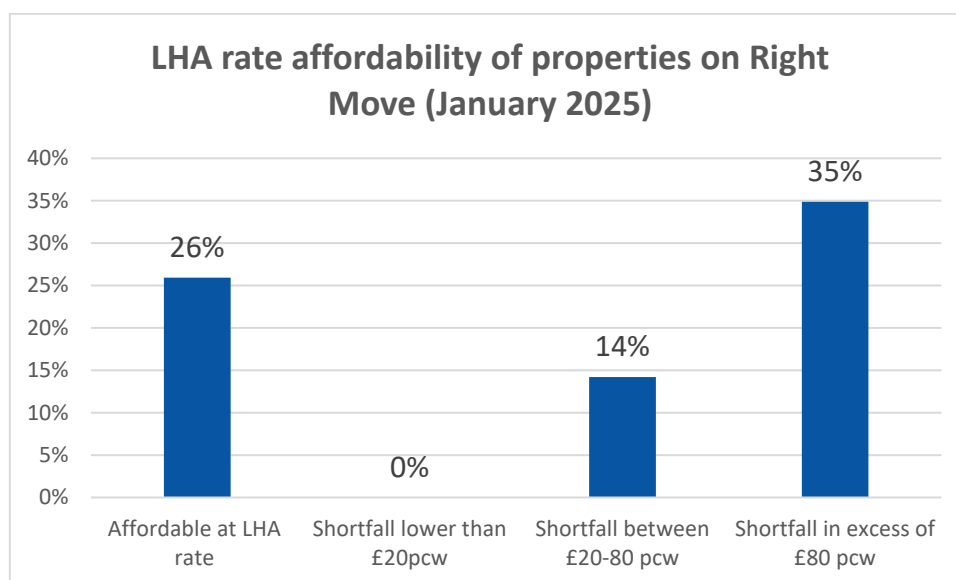
reflect the 30th percentile of rental prices in a given area, ensuring that claimants can access affordable housing within their locality.

- 3.19 For residents in Knowsley, LHA rates vary depending on the specific BRMA in which a property is situated. Knowsley overlaps with three distinct regions: **St Helens**, **Greater Liverpool**, and **North Cheshire**. The LHA rates for a property in Knowsley will depend on which of these regions it falls into.
- 3.20 The weekly amount of LHA also varies based on the size of the property and the number of bedrooms required. This includes:
- Shared accommodation or rooms in shared houses.
  - **1-bedroom properties or studios** for single claimants requiring self-contained accommodation.
  - **2-bedroom, 3-bedroom, or 4-bedroom properties** for families or households with specific needs.
- 3.21 The table below sets out the weekly LHA rates for the different areas of Knowsley broken down by property size.

	Greater Liverpool	St Helens	North Cheshire
Shared accommodation	£79.25	£74.74	£78.59
1 bedroom (self-contained)	£115.07	£97.81	£109.32
2 bedrooms	£136.93	£120.82	£135.78
3 bedrooms	£149.59	£143.84	£159.95
4 bedrooms	£201.97	£184.11	£230.14
5 bedrooms	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

- 3.22 To evaluate the availability of locally affordable properties within the LHA rates, we conducted a snapshot analysis of all rental listings on "Right Move" as of January 8, 2025. This assessment examined the percentage of properties affordable at the designated LHA rates for Knowsley. Additionally, we analysed the proportion of properties falling into shortfall categories, segmented into the following brackets: less than £20 difference between LHA rate and weekly rent advertised, shortfall of between £20–£80, and shortfall over £80 per week (p/w).
- 3.23 A total of 44 properties were listed for rent on "Right Move", comprising 13 2-bedroom properties, 27 3-bedroom homes, and 4 houses with 4 bedrooms. The tables below set out the availability of properties within the different price brackets for each of the locally available LHA rates.

	Affordable at LHA rate	Shortfall lower than £20 p/w	Shortfall between £20-80 p/w	Shortfall in excess of £80 p/w
<b>1-bedroom</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>
Greater Liverpool	0%	0%	0%	0%
North Cheshire	0%	0%	0%	0%
St Helens	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>2-bedroom</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Greater Liverpool	0%	0%	0%	100%
North Cheshire	0%	0%	0%	100%
St Helens	0%	0%	0%	100%
<b>3-bedroom</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>40%</b>
Greater Liverpool	4%	0%	56%	41%
North Cheshire	4%	0%	67%	30%
St Helens	4%	0%	48%	48%
<b>4-bedroom</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>
Greater Liverpool	100%	0%	0%	0%
North Cheshire	100%	0%	0%	0%
St Helens	100%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Average available</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>35%</b>



- 3.24 There were no 1-bedroom properties available to rent in Knowsley on the date of the snapshot. This absence highlights potential issues with the supply of smaller homes, which are crucial for meeting the needs of single individuals or couples. The lack of availability may reflect broader market trends, such as insufficient development of smaller units or high demand outpacing supply, making it particularly challenging for these groups to access appropriate housing.
- 3.25 Of the 13 x 2-bedroom properties available locally there were no affordable options at any of the possible LHA rates. Notably, 100% of these properties have a shortfall in excess of £80 per week, making this property type entirely unaffordable for families needing modestly sized accommodations under LHA rates.
- 3.26 There is limited affordability for 3-bedroom properties, with only 4% of the 27 properties available at the LHA rate. A majority (57%) fall into the shortfall range of £20–£80 per week, while a significant 40% exceed an £80 per week shortfall. This pattern is consistent across the regions, with St Helens showing the highest proportion of properties with a shortfall exceeding £80 (48%), while North Cheshire has a relatively lower percentage in this category (30%). These figures indicate that 3-bedroom properties are somewhat more attainable than smaller units, though affordability remains challenging for most households.
- 3.27 Interestingly, 4-bedroom properties are the only category where 100% of listings are affordable at the LHA rate across all regions. This suggests a strong alignment between LHA rates and market pricing for larger properties, likely influenced by the higher LHA thresholds set for these unit sizes. However, it is important to note that the sample size for larger properties was limited, with only four listings available. This small sample may not fully reflect the broader market trends and could indicate potential variability in affordability for larger homes depending on availability at any given time.

### **Waiting List, Lettings and Property Pool Plus**

- 3.28 Knowsley's waiting list for social housing has fallen between 2022/23 and 2023/24 from 2,737 households to 2,358. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, 43% of households (1,011 of whom 110 were in Band A) were waiting for a 1 bedroom property, 37% (878, of whom 75 were in Band A) for a two bedroom property, 16% (376 of whom 28 were in Band A) for a 3 bedroom property and 4% (80 households, 20 in Band A) for a 4 bedroom property. There are however about 13 households that require 5-6+bedrooms. The pattern of need is fairly consistent between 2021/22 and 2023/24 with the largest number of households requiring 1-bedroom properties.
- 3.29 In 2021/22 and 2022/23 8% of those on the waiting list were there due to overcrowding, accounting for around 260 households. Conversely there were 234 households at 31st March 2024 that were under-occupying, of these 163 were under-occupying by 1 bedroom and 56 households by 2 bedrooms.
- 3.30 Knowsley is part of Property Pool Plus, a choice-based lettings system operating across five of the six local authority areas within the Liverpool City Region. The average wait time (in days) for housing is set out below.

Band	2021/22 12-month average	2022/23 12-month average	2023/24 12-month average
A	113	174	213
B	384	437	592
C	306	485	566
D	369	491	N/A
E	527	675	N/A
F	N/A	N/A	N/A

- 3.31 It should be noted that applicants in Band A continued to wait the shortest time to secure a new home, generally seven months, however, in Quarter 3 of 23/24, the average wait time was just over eight months. This is a slight increase from the previous quarter whereby Band A applicants waited just five months to be rehoused. This can be partially attributable to more categories now being included into the Band A priority group due to the change in the Allocations Policy that was implemented from Jan 2024. It should also be noted that N/A is used where no households in the priority banding D, E and F are being offered a property.

### **The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Homelessness**

- 3.32 Knowsley is part of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) which has been one of the National Housing First Pilot sites. The local pilot in Knowsley has consisted of 3 support workers and a shared manager with Halton and a case load of 18 Knowsley residents with a history of rough sleeping and complex needs. The Housing First<sup>19</sup> programme funding is due to end in 2026 (after a 1 year roll over of funding) and future funding commitments are uncertain. To date there are 31 Housing First tenancies in Knowsley and 6 individuals have 'graduated' from the service and no longer require the level of support provided.
- 3.33 The LCRCA also receive £2m from the Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) to commission early intervention and an assertive outreach programme delivered by Whitechapel targeting rough sleepers across the region. The team has a registered mental health nurse and social prescriber and is active in Knowsley as well as Halton and St Helens. The City Region also funds AfEO (Accommodation for Offenders) and the Offender specialist role in the Housing Solutions team to support early interventions and prison release co-ordination. This officer is co-located with probation for 2 days a week and the impact on pre-release work and links into CAS3 and AfEO is reported to be good with a range of positive outcomes being achieved. The City Region is currently trialling a Homelessness Social Worker role in St. Helen's Council with a view to potentially extending this role across the City Region.
- 3.34 The City Region is looking to establish a taskforce group across the region to work on joint initiatives to develop regional solutions to homelessness. Knowsley is regarded as a

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<sup>19</sup> Housing First is the provision of housing and wrap around intensive floating support to people with complex needs related to a history of homelessness and rough sleeping.

collaborative partner with good practice in place particularly around MAPPA and MARAC processes and partnerships.

### **Successes/achievements since the 2020-2025 Homelessness Strategy**

- 3.35 The 2020-2025 Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was completed before the Covid Pandemic which had such a profound and unforeseen effect on housing and homelessness issues. The main priorities set out in that strategy are still relevant, and in most cases the issues more acute. The Council has a number of successes and achievements that have been set out below.
- 3.36 The Council has invested in Housing Solutions staff, this has led to lower caseloads and a more responsive service.
- 3.37 Part of this investment has included specialist Housing Solutions officers supporting ex-prisoners and people experiencing domestic abuse.
- 3.38 The Council has also established a team of 3 Intensive Support Officers – this is a cross-tenure service that has helped prevent many cases of homelessness and enabled people to better sustain their tenancies and be sign posted to services they need.
- 3.39 There is good collaborative working with Housing Regeneration and Development colleagues as well as with Children’s Services, Communities and Neighbourhoods and Public Health.
- 3.40 There are good relationships with some RPs/other housing providers (for example the YMCA) and a shared commitment to early intervention and prevention.
- 3.41 There is good Public Health involvement – with an understanding of homelessness and health links and involvement of the Principal Homelessness Officer in various statutory boards in Knowsley and the producing of relevant data.
- 3.42 Knowsley has a good commitment to sub-regional working to meet housing/homelessness needs: Knowsley leads the sub-regional Housing and Regeneration Board and the City Region Officers Group.
- 3.43 The Council has been Increasing its Council owned/leased supply of temporary accommodation (TA) through acquisition; and has, through the Intensive Support Team supported residents in TA to facilitate bidding and move-on.
- 3.44 The reviewing and rationalising of the banding system on Property Pool Plus has provided greater clarity for service users.
- 3.45 Working with Housing Regeneration and Development colleagues around increasing affordable housing supply, specialist accommodation (such as the agreement for a second hostel) and move-on accommodation (the partnership with YMCA around exempt accommodation units), has been positive.
- 3.46 The Council’s Whole Life Commissioning model is enabling services to be commissioned on the basis of Early Intervention and Prevention, Targeted and Specialist support, and Long-Term Support, and the team’s role in commissioning across adults, children’s, housing and public health areas is a positive approach.

- 3.47 Care experienced persons are prioritised on Property Pool Plus. The Council's Family First and Early Help approach led by Children's Services is commendable. There is an Early Help Governance Group an early Help Strategy and a number of locality networks supported by early help co-ordinators working with partners to identify families at risk and co-ordinate support and interventions. Family First case managers support families on the edge of care and this preventative approach has led to reductions in the number of families requiring statutory care interventions. The Council has worked with RPs to define their commitment to care experienced young persons, to develop a joint housing protocol and to ensure access to wraparound support.
- 3.48 The employment service (Knowsley Works) includes providing support to obtain and retain employment to homeless people and people with Mental Health needs and for people with substance misuse issues. This is a good resource for supporting people into employment across Knowsley while supporting businesses to meet their skills and employment needs locally. Children's Services also works closely with Job Centre Plus/DWP to provide employment advice and to support parents into work. For those with a history of substance misuse the Individual Placement Service (IPS) consists of specialists' who work closely with treatment providers, and employers to assist someone in finding a job or career that fits with their values, preferences, and skills and uses the "Employment First" model, focuses on rapid placement into competitive employment, which are jobs paying at least minimum wage and open to anyone to apply.

### **Challenges/barriers to be addressed**

- 3.49 There are a number of challenges that the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will need to address.
- 3.50 There is an insufficient supply of one and two-bed properties to meet demand from single homeless people/small households. This has been identified through the Housing Needs Assessment of 2021 and by stakeholders involved in this review of homelessness. The feasibility and locations of these smaller units needs to be addressed.
- 3.51 The new strategy needs to take account of increasing PRS rents, exits from the PRS market, reduced social lettings and the impact of a cost-of-living crisis and deprivation which means homelessness is on an upward trend and the options available for homelessness prevention will need to be increased and strengthened.
- 3.52 Many people appear to present to the Council for assistance when they are in housing crisis. There is a need to better share data held across the council and its partners on families and individuals at risk of homelessness, and more use of data analytics to identify households in financial stress at earlier stage to identify those where earlier intervention can prevent homelessness.
- 3.53 There is a need to consider if Housing Solutions could increase outreach work in community venues, to encourage earlier engagement with people at risk of homelessness. There is also a need to consider how other professionals (GPs, substance misuse staff) who are outside the

Duty to Refer process can discuss/flag housing issues with Housing Solutions staff earlier on in their homelessness journey. On-line information needs to be clearer and easier to navigate.

- 3.54 There is a need to improve early use of the Duty to Refer by Adult Social Care, Jobcentre Plus, A&E and hospital in-patient services and to improve the quality of information sent to the Council to support early action.
- 3.55 There is no specialist accommodation for people with complex and multiple needs related to homelessness and rough sleeping and those – people just below the Care Act threshold for support. Many are considered too high risk by existing commissioned services. There needs to be more of a ‘risk sharing’ approach between Council services and partners, including RPs to improve outcomes for this group. Examples from Changing Future in Stoke on Trent and Expert Citizens CIC could be explored for models of joint work and risk sharing, this includes their development of Multi-Agency Resolution Group (MARG)<sup>20</sup>
- 3.56 There is a need to improve outcomes for homeless adults with care needs, by developing accommodation and support pathways for those who are homeless or rough sleeping and have a physical care need.
- 3.57 There is a need to improve links with Integrated Commissioning System leads responsible for the wider determinants of health and with anti-social behaviour (ASB) officers to ensure a whole systems approach so that wherever possible homelessness can be prevented.
- 3.58 Despite the Council’s TA acquisition programme, there is an ongoing high demand for TA, and it is not clear if the Council can meet all needs with the resulting risk of out of area placements, and use of nightly paid accommodation as well as multiple short-term placements before stable longer-term housing can be acquired/developed.
- 3.59 The lower turnover in social housing and the very low supply of PRS accommodation (as well as its unaffordability) means people stay in TA longer. The lack of housing that can be used as HMOs/shared housing makes it particularly difficult to accommodate under 35s.
- 3.60 Some RPs seem reluctant to accept homeless households, particularly where there are vulnerabilities such as mental health issues involved and appear to be quick to evict when there are problems.
- 3.61 Better retention within supported accommodation is positive, but the lack of overall capacity and the lack of appropriate move on, particularly into 1- or 2-bedroom property, or into higher support and care provision for those with complex needs, is causing silt up.
- 3.62 There is a need to review floating support provision, particularly the Tenancy Extra Support Service (TESS) which is under-capacity, alongside other floating support provision for mental health, and for rough sleepers (through the RSI navigator service), which appears to be over-capacity with a 23:1 worker caseload.
- 3.63 There is an under-supply of emergency accommodation – this means some people without a statutory duty to accommodate are remaining on the streets.

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<sup>20</sup> [Expert Citizens - Home](#)

- 3.64 Rising rough sleeping levels in the borough may make it more difficult for the street outreach service to continue to provide a rapid response to all rough sleepers in the borough.
- 3.65 There is a need for ongoing monitoring of tenancy outcomes for care experienced persons, to identify any tenancy failures and highlight if there is a need to increase wrap around support. This support should include employment support, young people consulted as part of this review identified that training flats were highly valued by them. The existing homeless provision for young people consists of 40 units spread across three sites in Huyton and Kirkby, this is furnished accommodation, and the location and buildings are considered old, isolated and no longer fit for purpose.
- 3.66 A Foyer model should be considered as this would provide learning and employment support alongside suitable accommodation and tenancy training. The support would need to include personalised attention, mentoring, coaching and access to mental health support.
- 3.67 There is a need to explore if access to 'stepping stone' or training flats can be increased, as this type of provision is highly valued by young people who were consulted as part of this review.

#### **4. Statutory Homelessness**

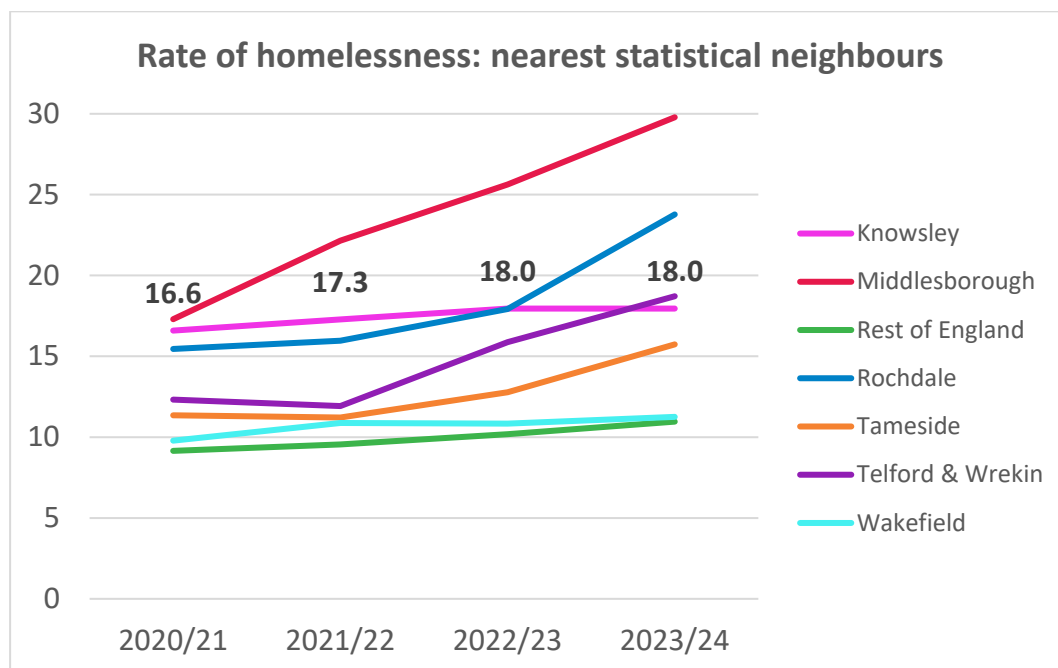
- 4.1 The Chartered Institute for Public Finance Accountancy's (CIPFA) 'Near Neighbour' model uses 40 socio-economic and descriptive metrics to match each local authority with a set of characteristically similar 'near neighbours' to help interpret statistical distance<sup>21</sup>.
- 4.2 Knowsley has a list of 15 nearest-neighbour local authority districts in England. We have selected five key neighbouring authorities for comparison, in consultation with officers at Knowsley. These core neighbours allow us to effectively evaluate Knowsley's performance relative to other similar local authorities, as well as to the broader 'Rest of England' (excluding London). The selected authorities are Middlesbrough, Rochdale, Tameside, Telford & Wrekin, and Wakefield.
- 4.3 In places, geographical comparisons are also made to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA), comprising Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens and Wirral. However, Halton is omitted from comparisons due to missing homelessness data.
- 4.4 Where figures are expressed as a rate per 1,000 households, household figures are drawn from the ONS 2018-based population projections.
- 4.5 Analysis of the Homeless Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC) data set covers the period from 2020/21 to 2023/24. The year 2020/21 was an atypical year as homelessness and rough sleeping numbers were affected by the Covid 19 pandemic and the moratorium on evictions as well as 'Everyone In' (the government programme for housing all rough sleepers). While the 2020/21 figures are included, comparisons have focussed on looking at trends from 2021/22.

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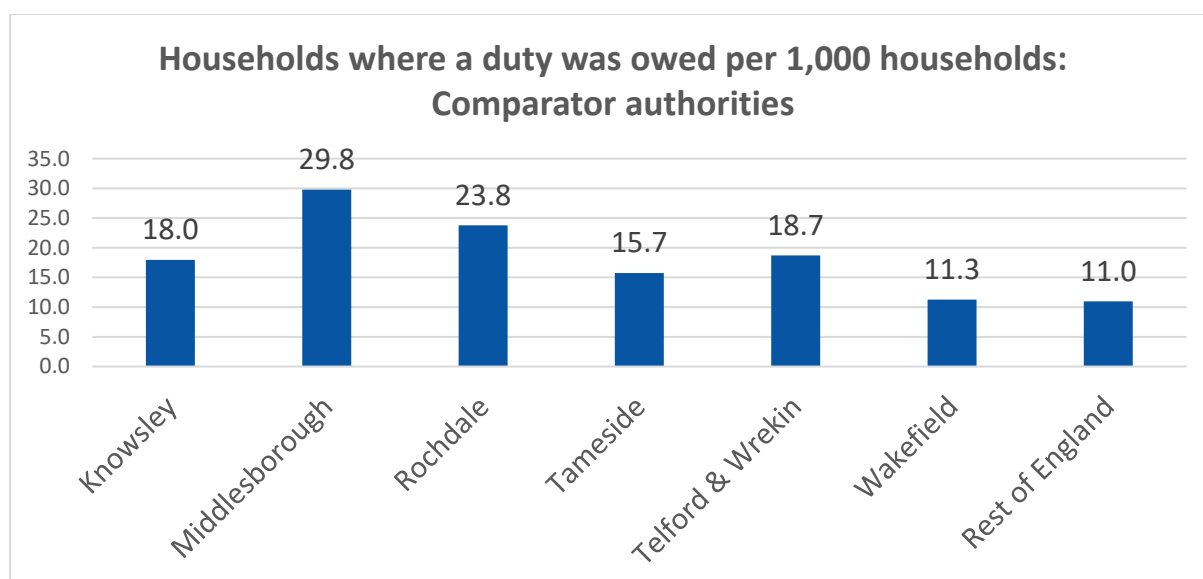
<sup>21</sup> [Nearest Neighbour Model](#)



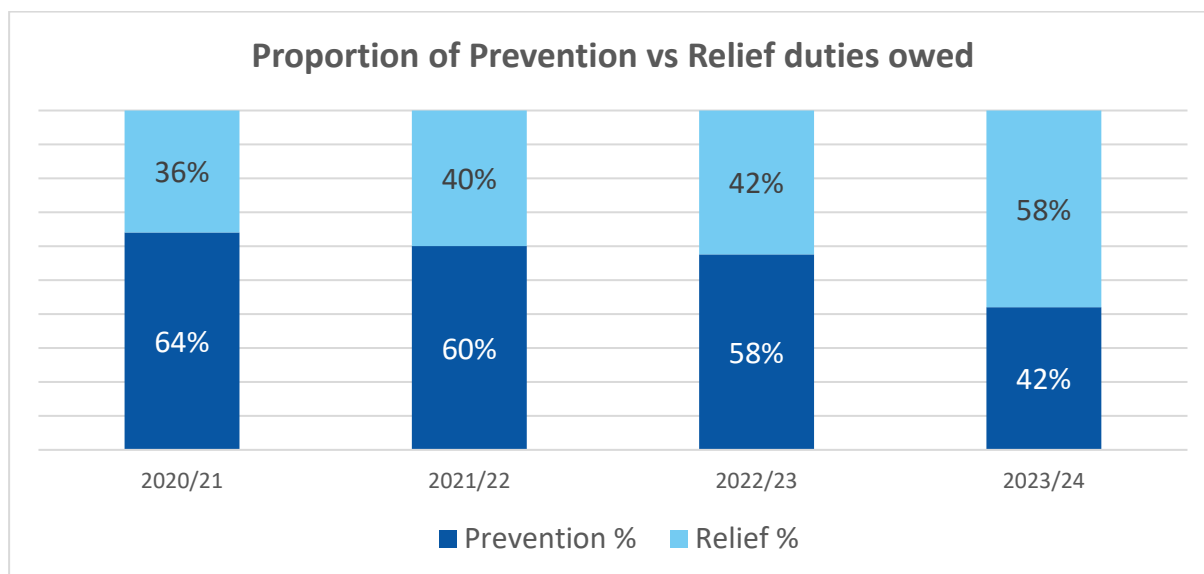
## Rate of homelessness



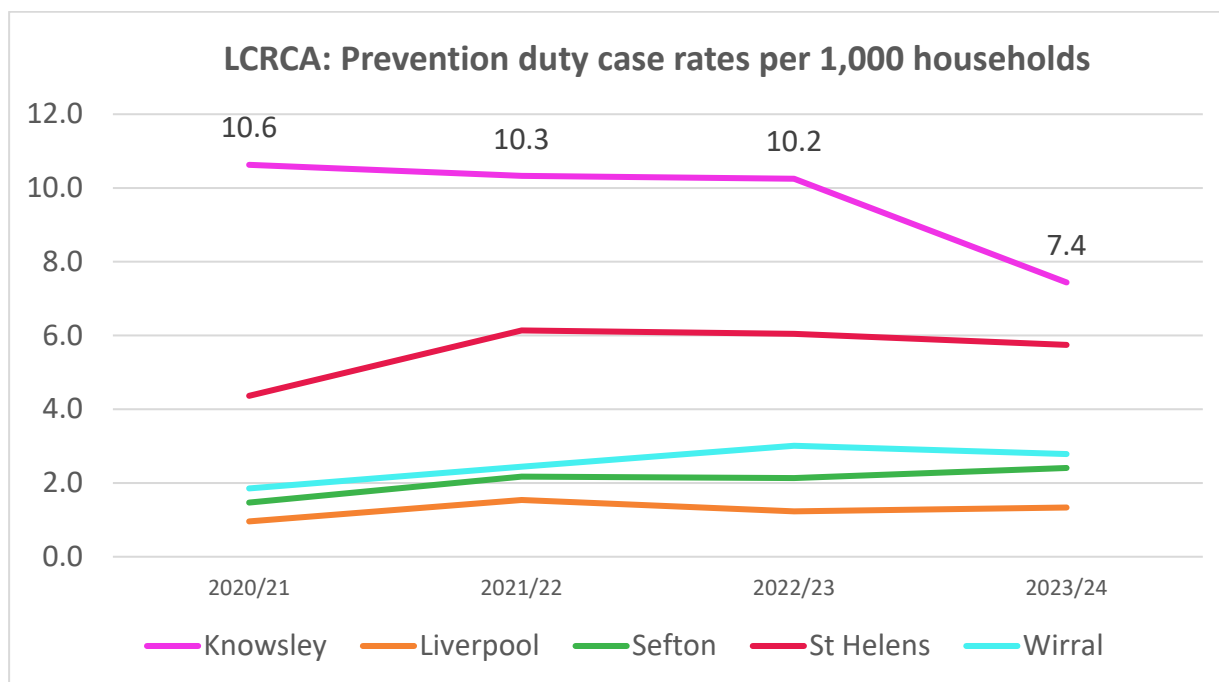
- 4.6 During the 2023/24 financial year, 1,147 people who received an initial homelessness assessment were owed either a prevention or a relief duty. This translates to a rate of 17.7 of 1,000 households in Knowsley; a tiny rise of 0.4% from the rate of 17.3 in every 1,000 households owed a duty in 2021/22.
- 4.7 Although the rate of homelessness in Knowsley has been on the rise, the same is true across five of Knowsley's core neighbour authorities, as well as the 'Rest of England' (which is 11%).
- 4.8 The rate at which homelessness has increased in Knowsley has been slower than the majority of its nearest statistical neighbours.

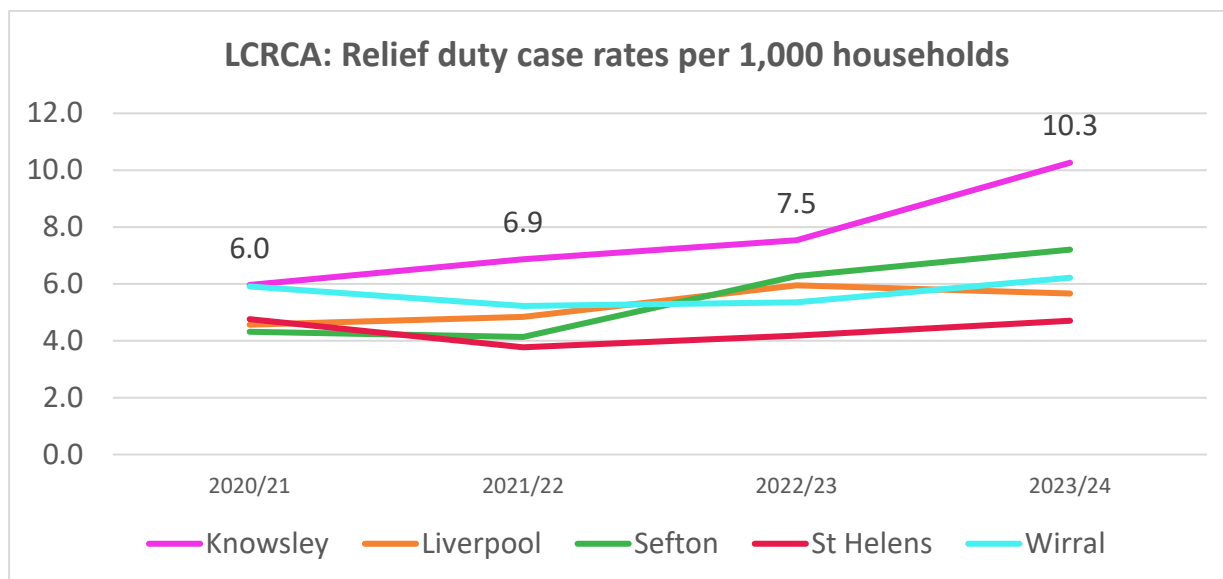


- 4.9 Of the selected five near neighbour comparators, the rate of homelessness by 1,000 households in Knowsley is in the median range. However, like its nearest statistical neighbours, there is a higher rate of homelessness in Knowsley than in the rest of England.



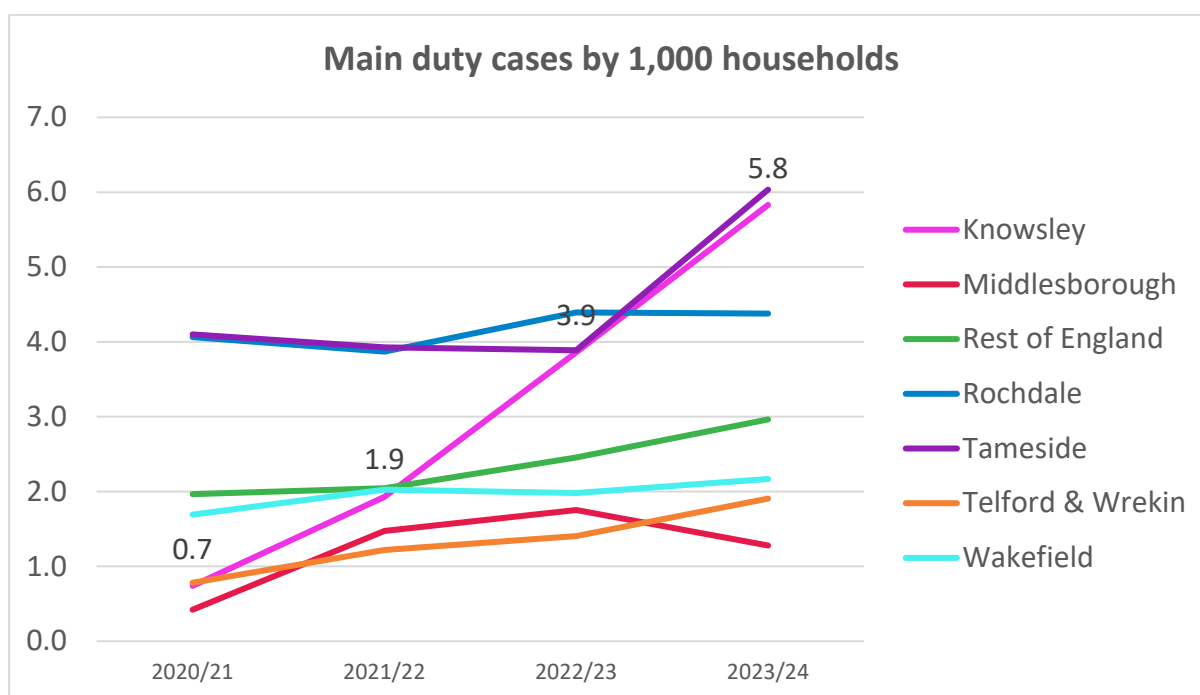
- 4.10 Of those households owed a duty in 2023/24, 58% were owed a relief duty compared to 42% who were owed a prevention duty. The proportion of households owed a relief duty has risen consistently since 2021/22, indicating that households may be presenting to homelessness services later on in their journey, and that prevention interventions are not working effectively.



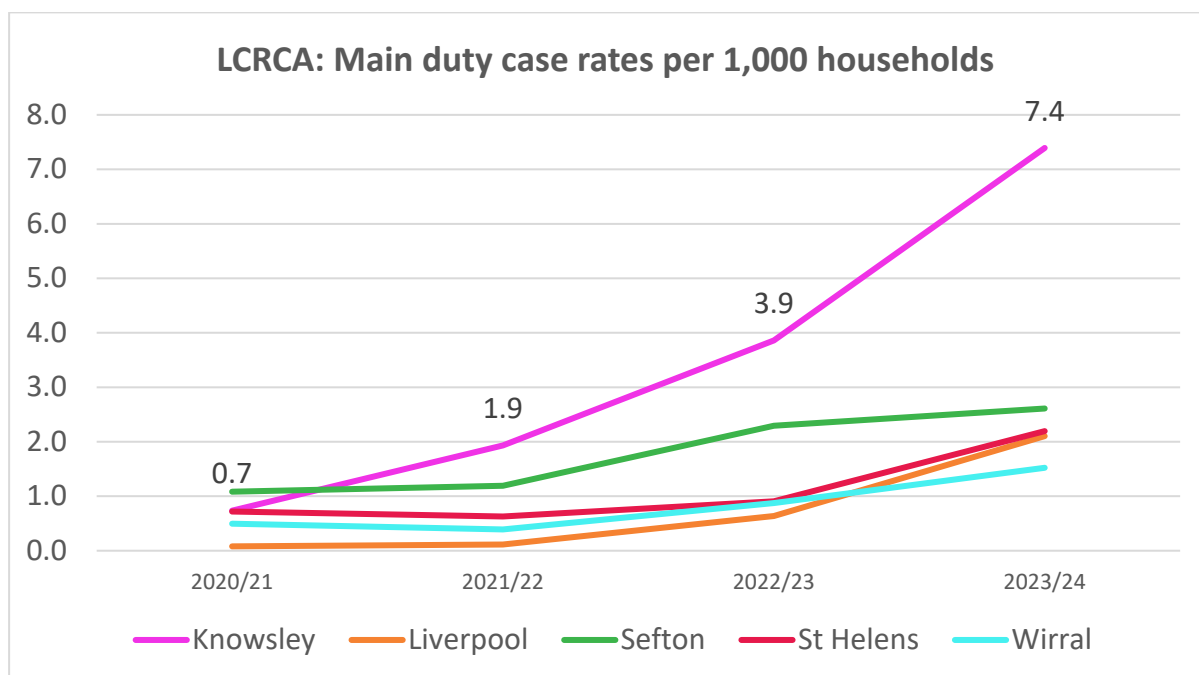


- 4.11 In the case of both relief and prevention duties, Knowsley's homelessness data exhibits a higher rate of duties owed per 1,000 households when compared to the LCRCA neighbouring authorities.
- 4.12 For prevention duties, Knowsley downward trend compares to rising duties in neighbouring areas across the LCRCA.
- 4.13 Knowsley's relief duty rate is higher than the rest of the LCRCA authorities and shows a significant increase from 6.9 per 1,000 of the population in 2021/22 to 10.3 in 2023/24. This upward trend contrasts with more stable or smaller increases in neighbouring LCRCA areas.

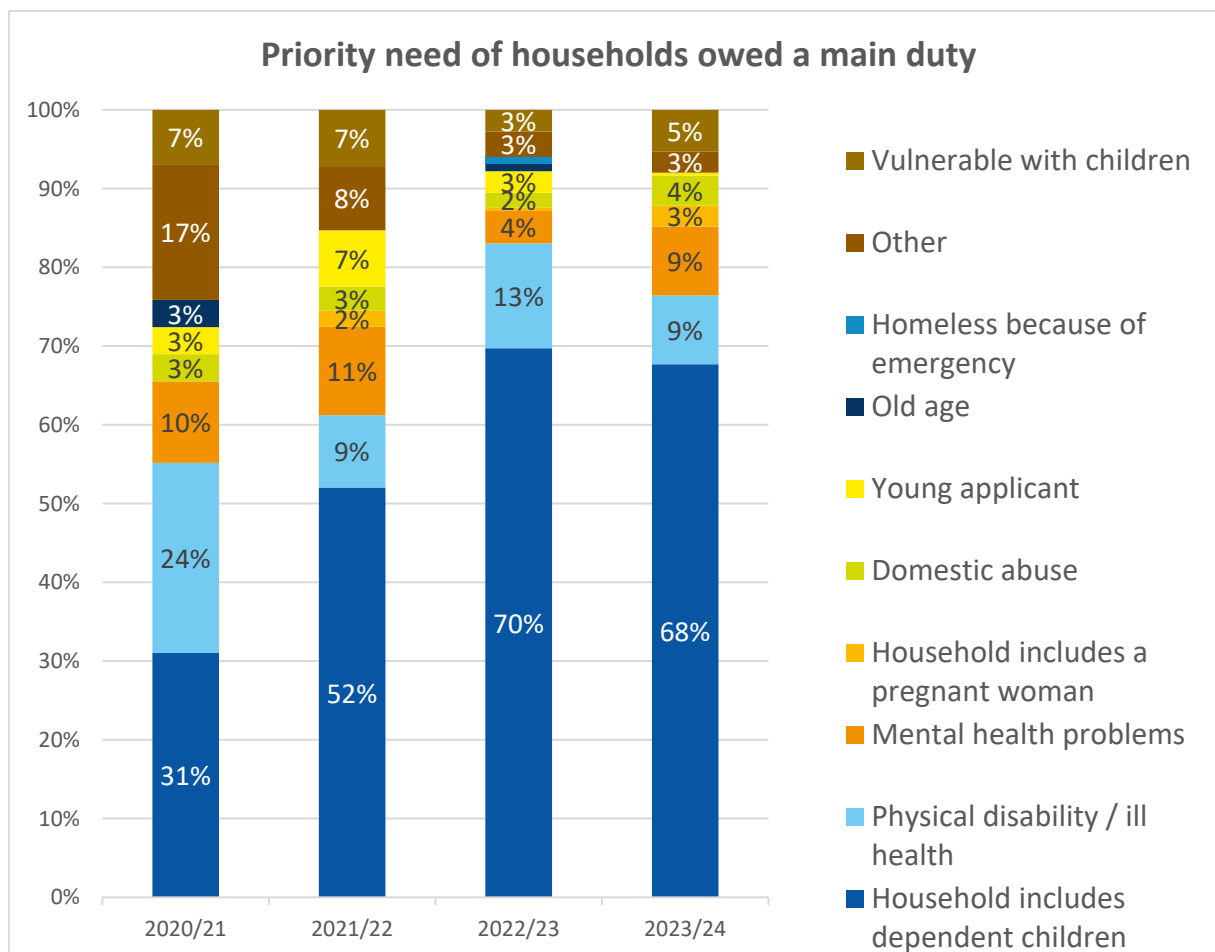
### Main duty assessments



- 4.14 The main duty assessments per 1,000 households have increased sharply from 1.9 in 2020/21 to 5.8 in 2023/24. This represents the steepest increase among comparator authorities, with Knowsley now reflecting the highest rate.



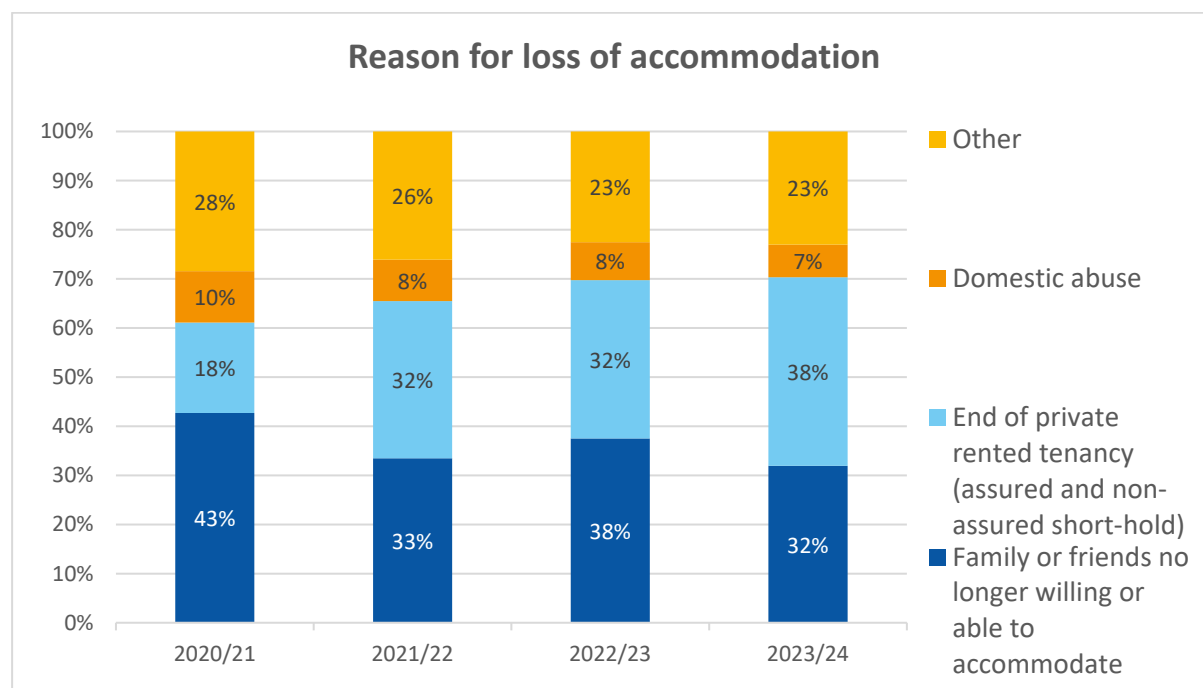
- 4.15 This growth is also dramatic when compared to neighbouring LCRCA regions, which although also rising, are doing so more gradually.
- 4.16 Main duty decisions are made when households are considered in priority need and where their homelessness has not been resolved within 56 days, meaning they are at risk if left without housing. The increase points to a reduction in suitable housing options for priority households.



- 4.17 There is a clear upward trend in the proportion of households with children experiencing homelessness. Households that include dependent children comprised 68% of all main duty cases in 2023/24, up from 52% in 2021/22.
- 4.18 The next most common support need of households owed a main duty has consistently been physical disability or ill health, though this accounts for a much smaller proportion of all main duty cases in 2023/24 at 9%.

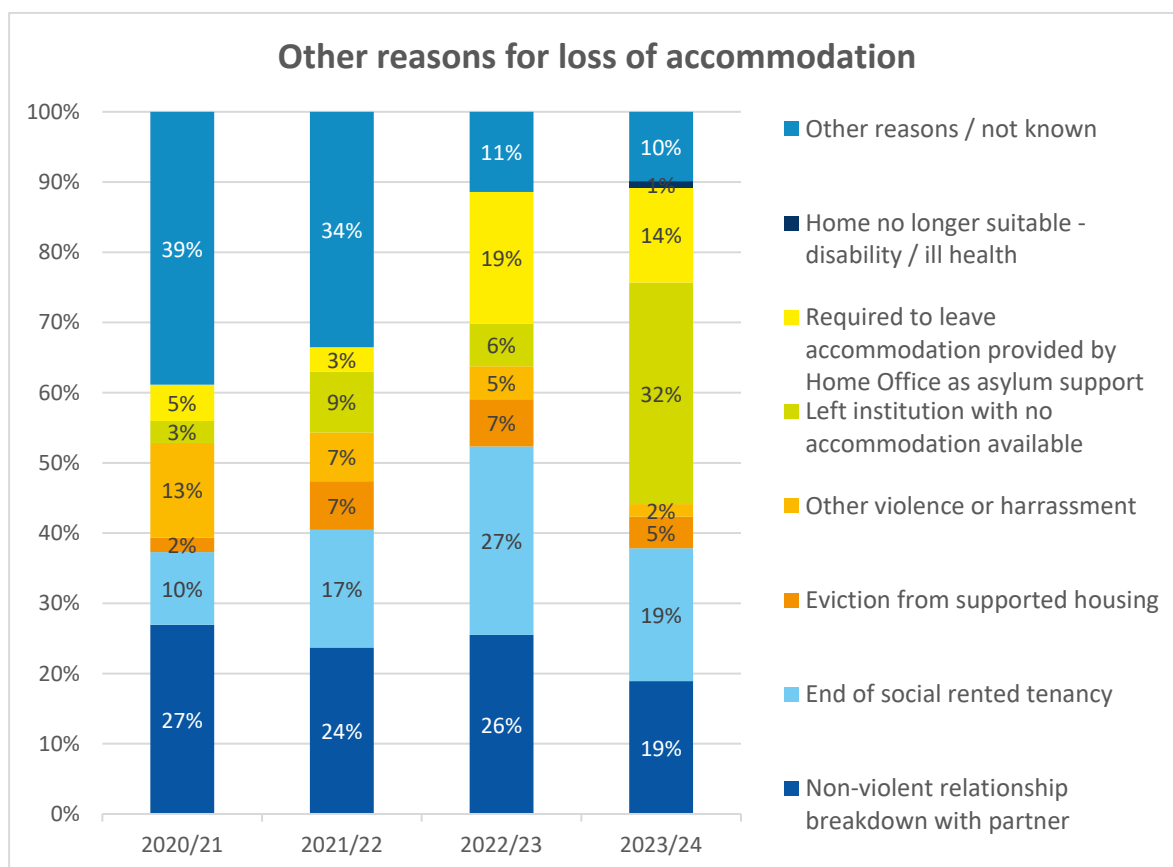
## Causes of homelessness

### Prevention duty

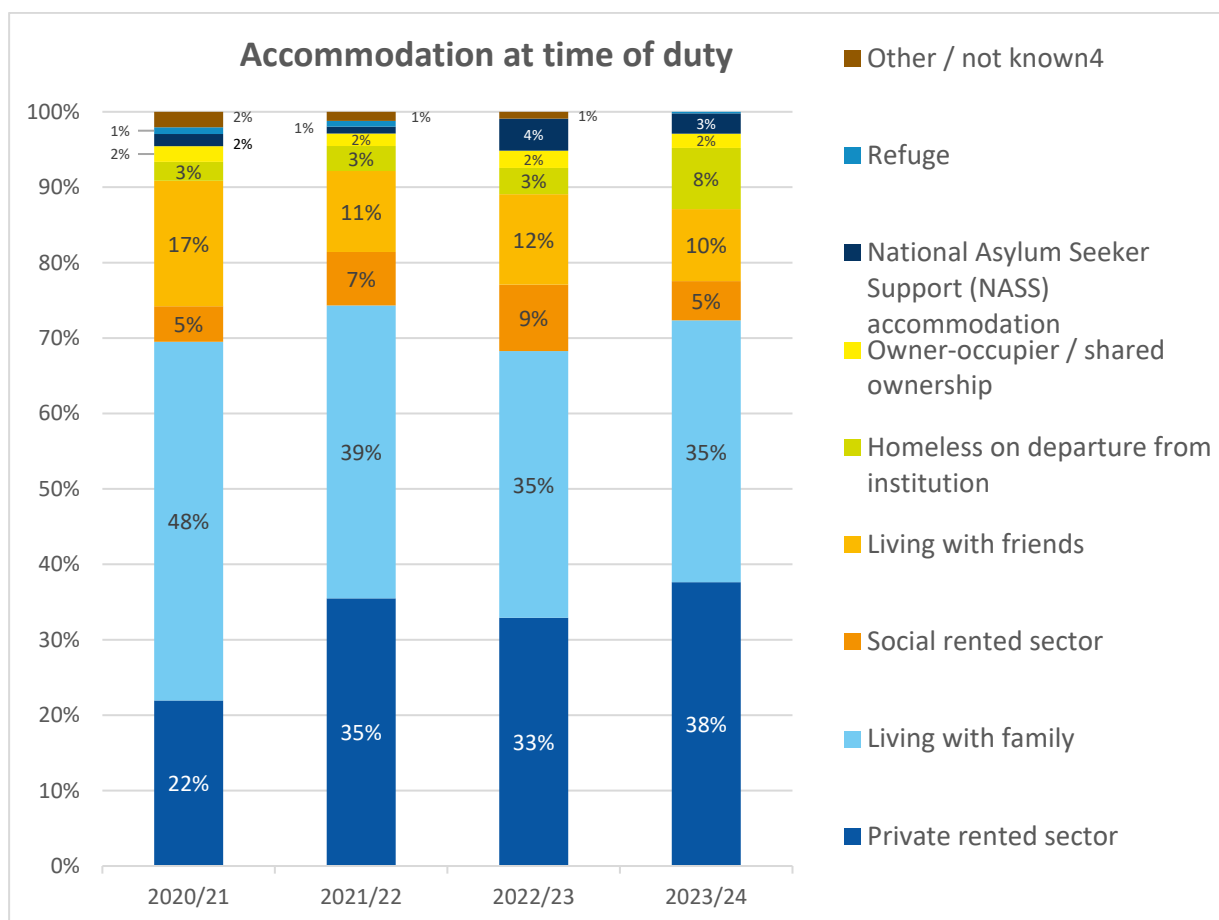


- 4.19 Of the households owed a prevention duty, a growing number are at risk of homelessness due to a loss of private rented tenancy. This cause now accounts for the largest proportion of prevention duties owed. It is not possible to determine the reason for the loss of private rented tenancy from the H-CLIC data.
- 4.20 The second most common reason for loss of accommodation amongst those owed a prevention duty was family or ` no longer being willing or able to accommodate (32%), followed by 'other' reasons (23%)<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Other reasons for loss of accommodation include: non-violent relationship breakdown; end of social rented tenancy; eviction from supported housing; other violence or harassment; left institution with no accommodation available; required to leave by home office as asylum support; home no longer suitable due to disability or ill health; other reasons/ not known.



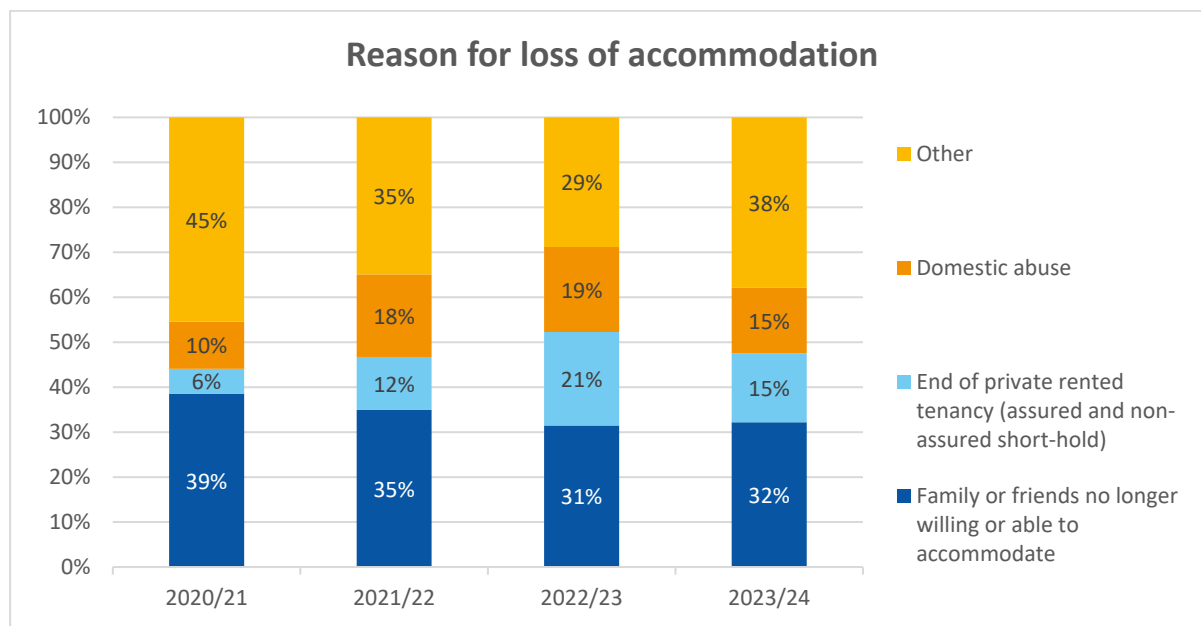
- 4.21 There has been a sharp rise in the number of prevention duties owed as a result of people leaving institutions with no accommodation available over the last financial year, now comprising 32% of cases compared to just 6% the previous year.
- 4.22 The proportion of people at risk of homelessness as a result of being required to leave asylum seeker accommodation has also been on the rise, with an increase since 2021/22 from 3% in 2021/22 to 19% in 2022/23 and a drop to 14% in 2023/24.
- 4.23 Evictions from social rented tenancies rose from 17% in 2021/22 to 27% in 2022/23 before reducing to 19% in 2023/24.



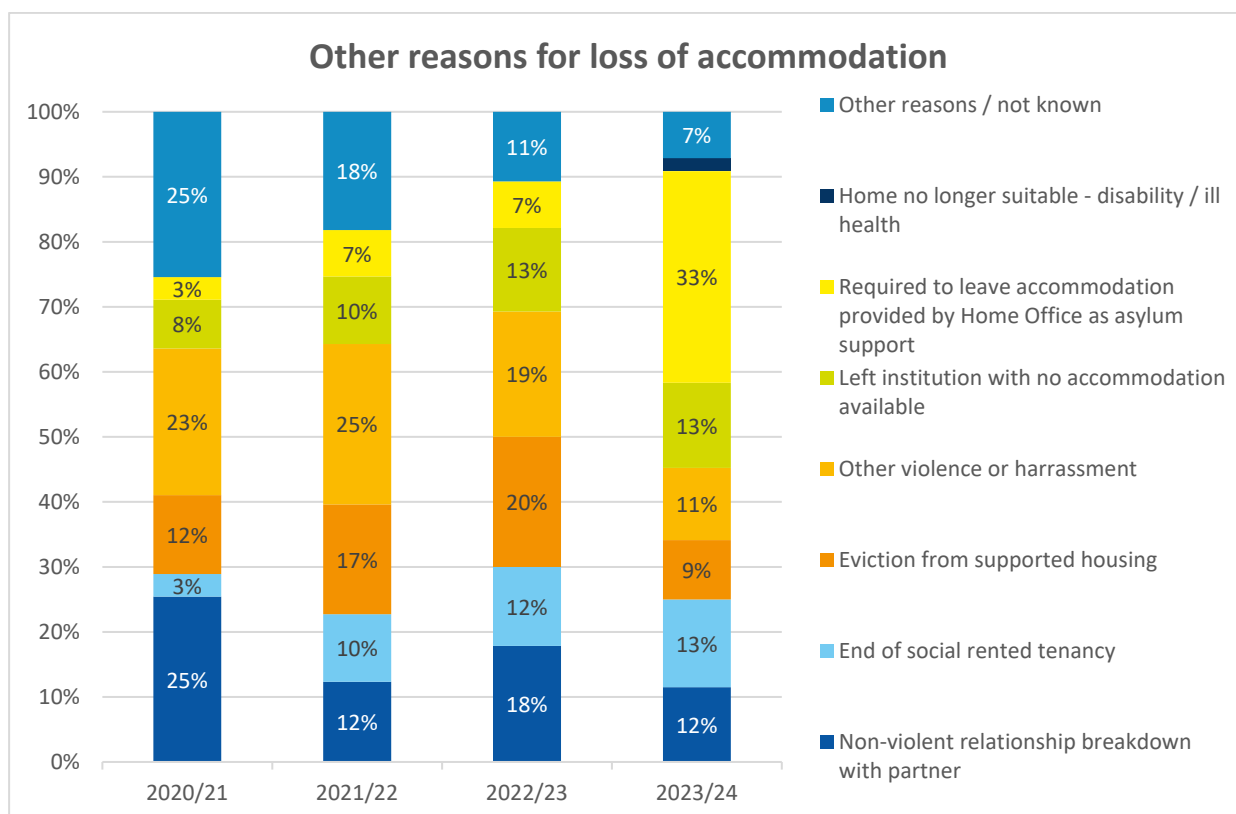
- 4.24 Of the households owed a prevention duty in Knowsley, a growing proportion are living in private rented sector accommodation at the time of their duty decision being made. This subgroup now comprises the largest proportion of all households owed a prevention duty, at 38% compared to 35% in 2021/22.
- 4.25 Whilst still only accounting for a small proportion of all households owed a prevention duty, there has also been a notable rise in the last financial year in the number of households at risk of homelessness due to leaving an institution with no accommodation available.



## Relief duty

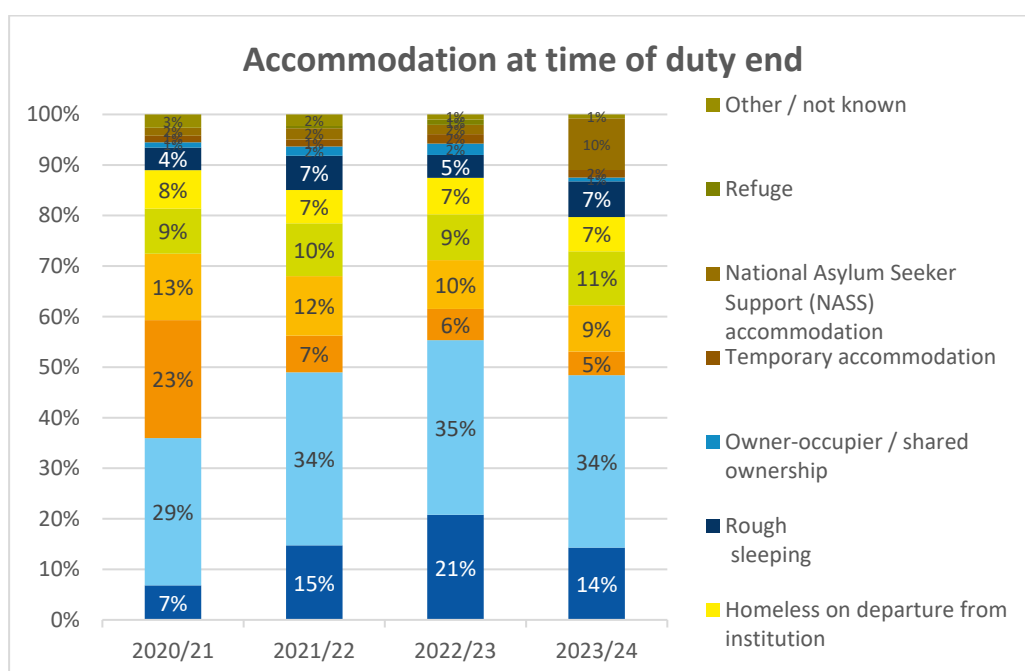


- 4.26 Of the households owed a relief duty, the number who are homeless as a result of a loss of private rented sector accommodation has risen over the last three years from 12% to 15%. However, there was a 29% drop in the number of households in this category between 2022/23 and 2023/24. Between 2021/22 and 2022/23 there was a sharp rise from 12% to 21%. It is probable that the increase is due to the ending of the moratorium on evictions during the pandemic which may have impacted on numbers. Since then, the figure has reduced to 15%. It is not possible to determine the reason for the loss of private rented tenancy from the HCLIC data.
- 4.27 Of any single reason, the largest proportion of households owed a relief duty in Knowsley have been homeless as a result of family or friends no longer being willing or able to accommodate (32% in 2023/24).



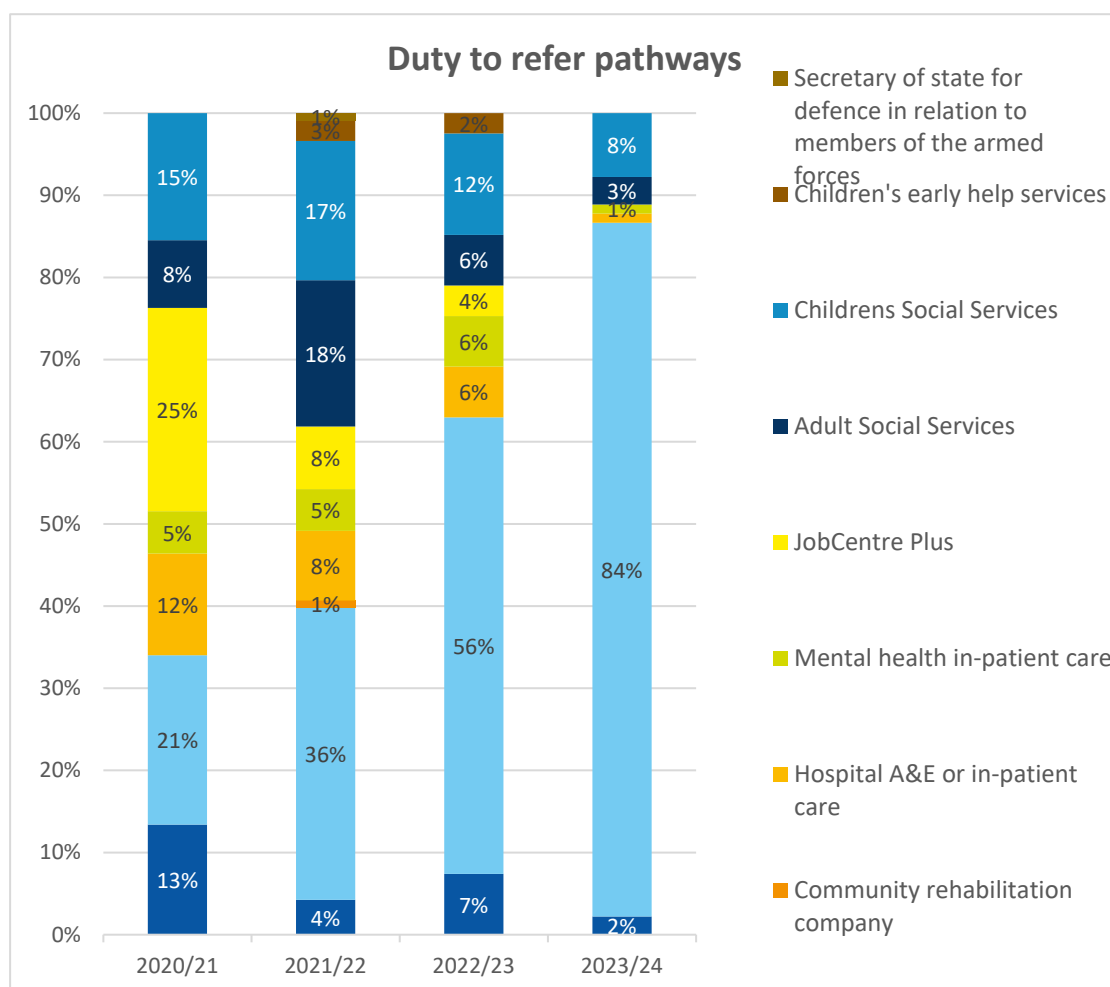
4.28 The proportion of households owed a relief duty who are homeless as a result of being required to leave asylum seeker accommodation had been slowly rising until last year, which saw a sharp increase from 7% to 33%. Last year, households leaving asylum seeker accommodation and becoming homeless accounted for the largest proportion of all other reasons for loss of accommodation.

4.29 The proportion of households leaving institutions with no accommodation available has also been rising steadily since 2021/22.



- 4.30 Across all years, the social rented sector consistently represents the largest proportion of accommodation for households who secure accommodation at the end of their relief duty, remaining relatively stable at around 34–35%.
- 4.31 The data shows a fluctuating trend in the proportion of households owed a relief duty living in the private rented sector, with an initial increase from 7% in 2020/21 to a peak of 21% in 2022/23, followed by a decline to 14% in 2023/24.
- 4.32 The proportion of households in NASS accommodation rose sharply from 2% in 2022/23 to 10% in 2023/24.

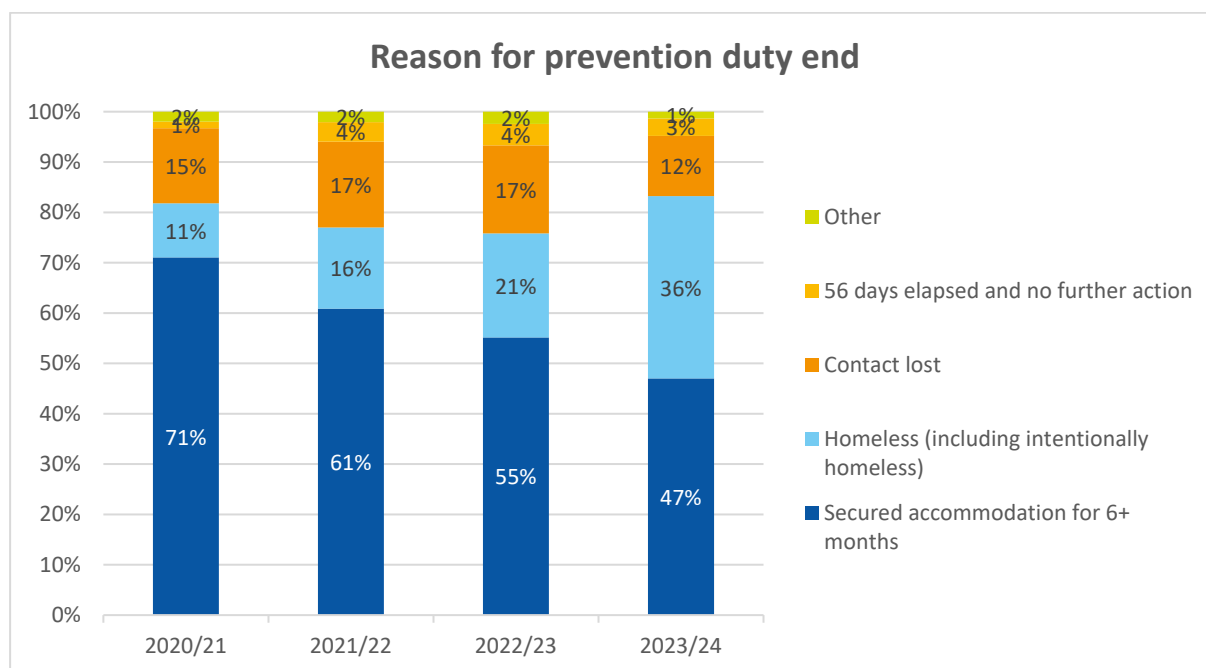
## Referrals



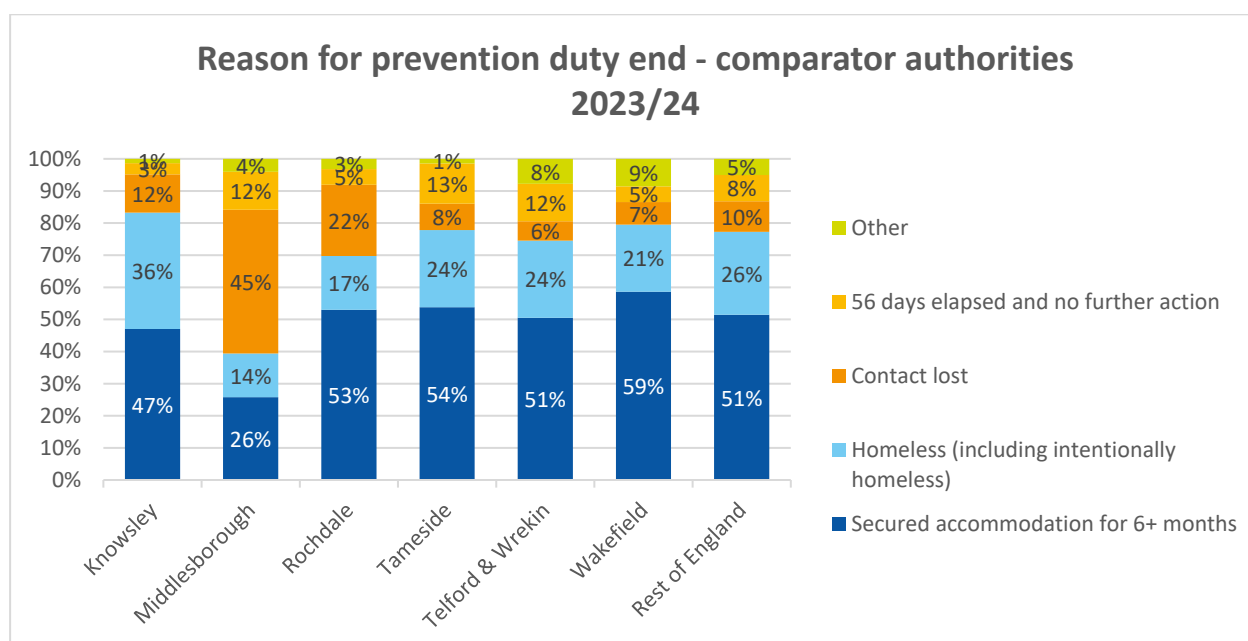
- 4.33 Across the four-year period, the majority of households that were assessed via a referral pathway came via a duty to refer. On average, duty to refer accounts for 59% of referral cases per year, compared to 39% which come from agencies not subject to the duty to refer, and 2% from other local authorities.
- 4.34 The proportion of households accessing assessments via duty to refer as a result of referrals by the National Probation Service has been increasing since 2021/22 and now accounts for a large majority at 84%.

## 5. Outcomes

### Prevention

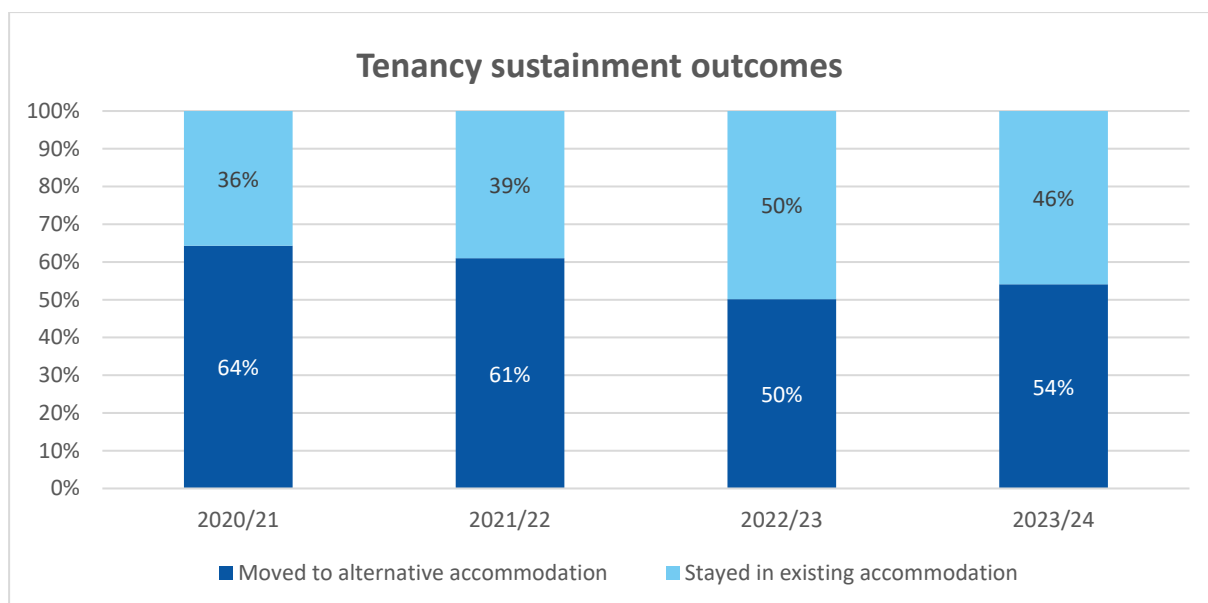


- 5.1 The rate at which prevention duties have ended in Knowsley has declined by 24% since 2021/22 from 10.4 in every 1,000 households to 8.0.
- 5.2 This decline in prevention duties ending has been accompanied by a decline of 23% in the number of households finding secure accommodation for 6+ months at the point of their duty closure, and a simultaneous increase of 25% in the proportion of households who end up homeless at the end of their prevention duty. This indicates a significant downturn in positive prevention duty outcomes.

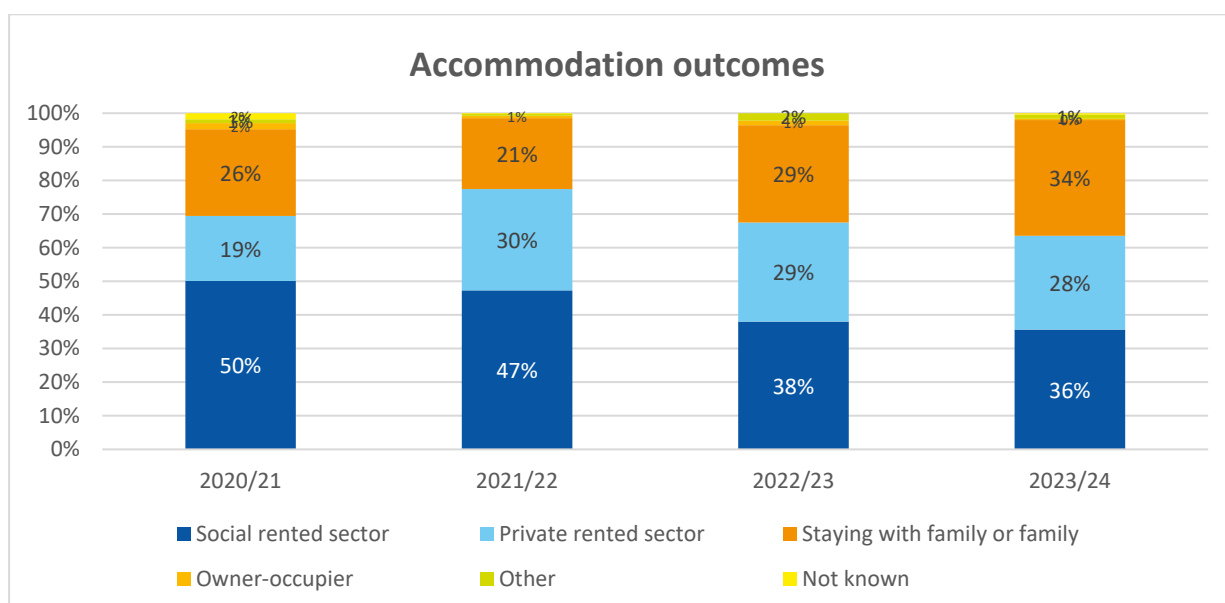


5.3 Data from 2023/24 indicates that of the comparator authorities, Knowsley has one of the lowest rates of accommodation outcomes at the point of prevention duty end at 47%, with only Middlesbrough having a poorer outcome.

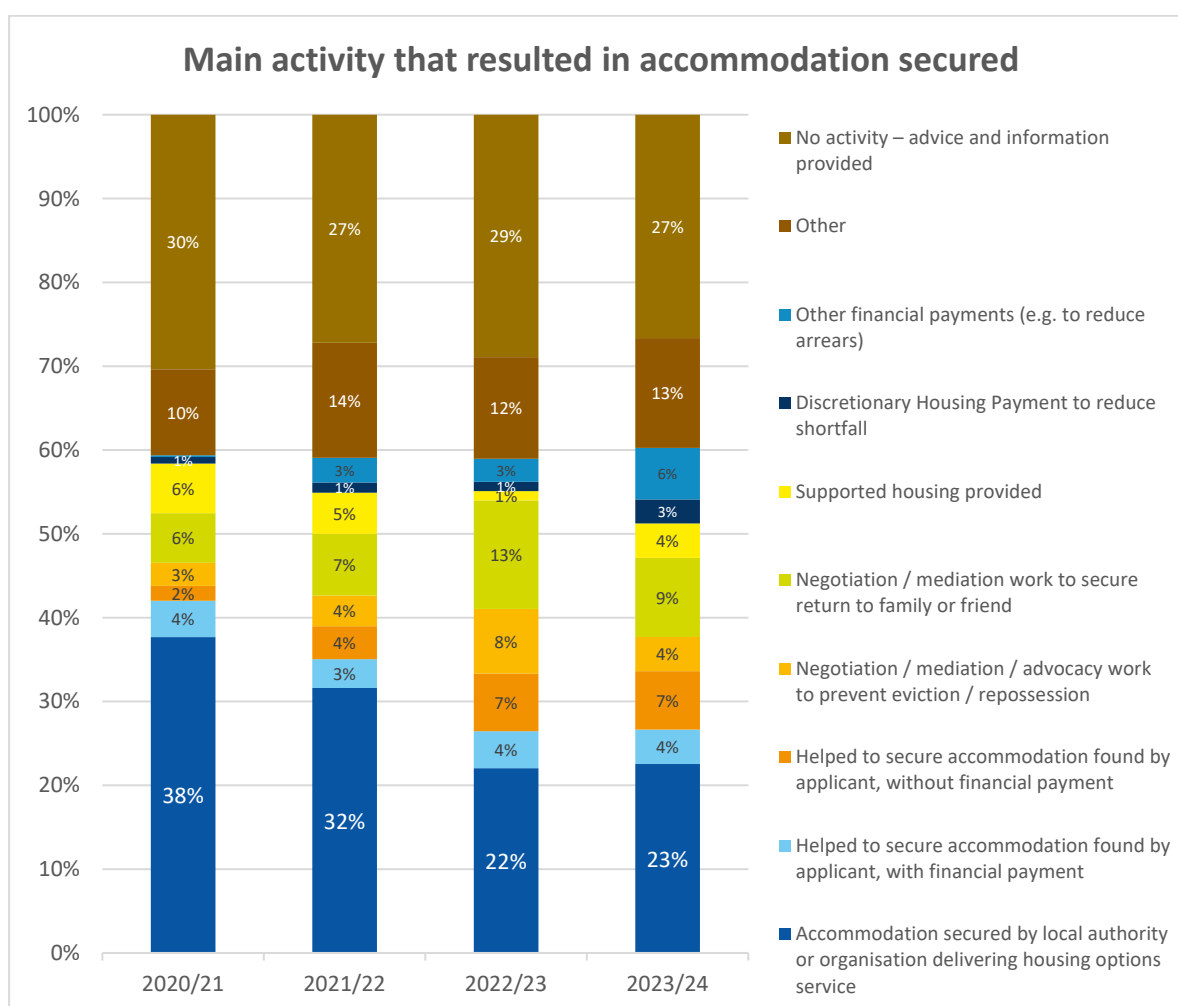
5.4 Knowsley also had the highest rate of prevention duty cases ending with households becoming homeless (including intentionally homeless at 36%, indicating that preventative interventions were ineffective in these instances. Households that became homeless unintentionally would subsequently qualify for either relief duty or main housing duty.



5.5 Of the households who secured accommodation for six or more months at the point of their prevention duty closure in Knowsley, the proportion staying in their existing accommodation increased from **39% in 2021/22** to a peak of **50% in 2022/23**, then slightly declined to **46% in 2023/24**. This indicates a growing emphasis or success in helping households maintain their current tenancies, although there was a slight drop in the most recent year.



- 5.6 Of the households that secured accommodation for six or more months at the point of prevention duty closure<sup>23</sup>, the proportion **staying with family or friends**, rose from **21% in 2021/22** to **34% in 2022/23**. This could reflect increasing reliance on informal housing arrangements, possibly due to affordability issues, reduced access to other housing options, or effective family liaison services.
- 5.7 The proportion of prevention outcomes in the **private rented sector** has slightly decreased from **30% in 2021/22** to **28% in 2022/23**.
- 5.8 The proportion of prevention outcomes in the **social rented sector** steadily decreased from **47% in 2021/22** to **36% in 2022/23**. This indicates a reduced reliance on or availability of social rented housing as a resolution for preventing homelessness. Possibly as a result of the reduction in the number of social lets becoming available.

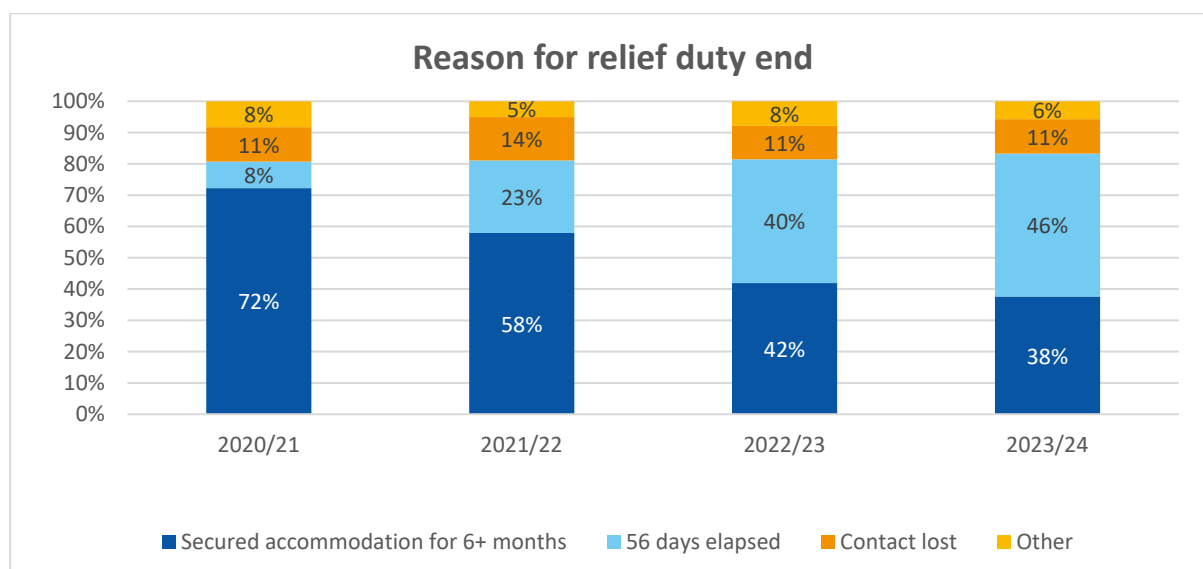


- 5.9 Of the households who were secured accommodation in Knowsley after being owed a prevention duty, the proportion who did so via direct accommodation interventions by the local authority or housing service dropped significantly from **32% in 2021/22** to **23% in 2023/24**, again possibly indicating a lack of social housing lettings.

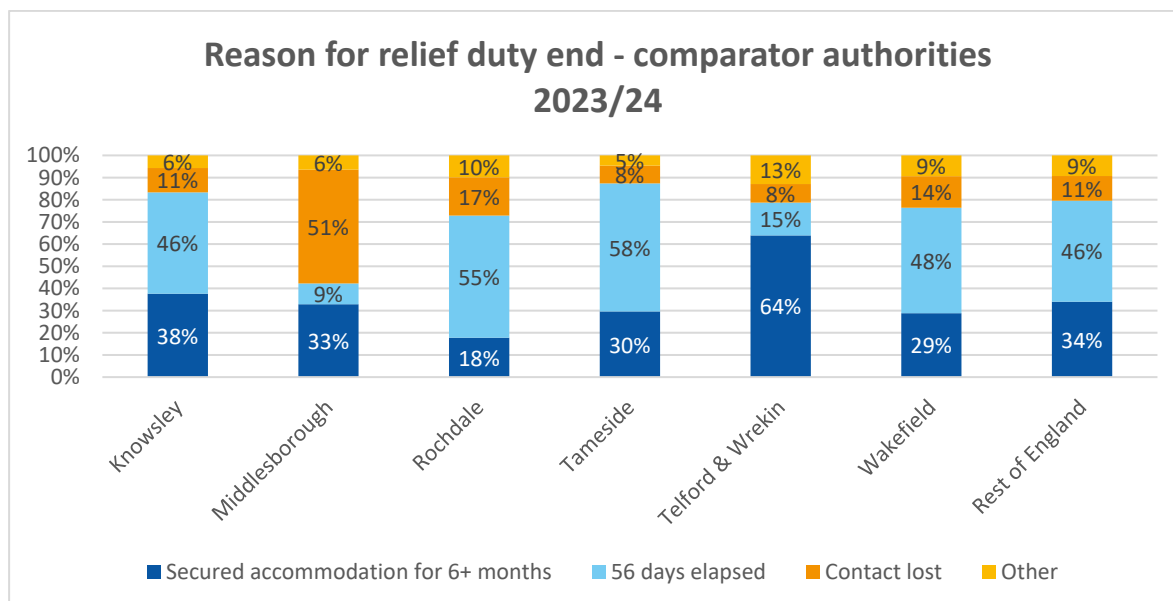
<sup>23</sup> Either by sustaining existing accommodation or finding an alternative.

- 5.10 The use of **negotiation/mediation/advocacy work** instead rose steadily over the years:
- To prevent eviction/repossession: from **4% in 2021/22** to **8% in 2022/23**, though it fell to **4% in 2023/24**.
  - To secure return to family/friends: from **7% in 2021/22** to a peak of **13% in 2022/23**, declining slightly to **9% in 2023/24**.
- 5.11 Financial payments, including **Discretionary Housing Payments** (DHPs) and other payments to reduce arrears, ranged between **1%-6%** over the years (see also section 18 on how DHPs have been used to support households).
- 5.12 The "no activity – advice and information provided" category accounted for a significant and stable proportion of outcomes, fluctuating between **27%-30%**.

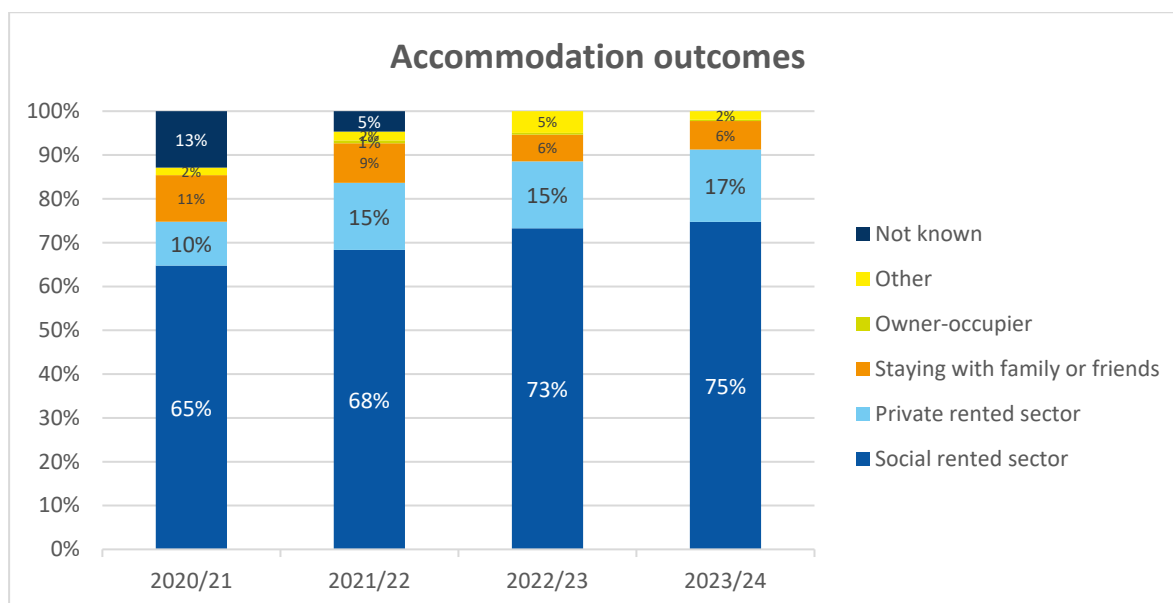
## Relief



- 5.13 However, this increase in relief duties ending is attributable to an accompanying increase in the proportion of cases ending as a result of 56 days having elapsed since the date the duty decision was made with no outcome during this period. That is there has been an increase from 23% to 46% in the proportion of relief duty cases that the council is unable to resolve.
- 5.14 Equally, there has been a considerable decline of 34% in the proportion of households who find secure accommodation for 6+ months before the end of their relief duty period since 2021/22.



5.15 Despite a decline in accommodation outcomes for relief duties, Knowsley continues to perform well compared to both its selected near-neighbour authorities and the rest of England. Knowsley achieves a 38% accommodation outcome rate, outperforming the national average of 34% and the 35% average across its five selected neighbour authorities. This suggests that, while Knowsley faces increasing challenges in securing accommodation outcomes, these difficulties reflect a broader nationwide trend.

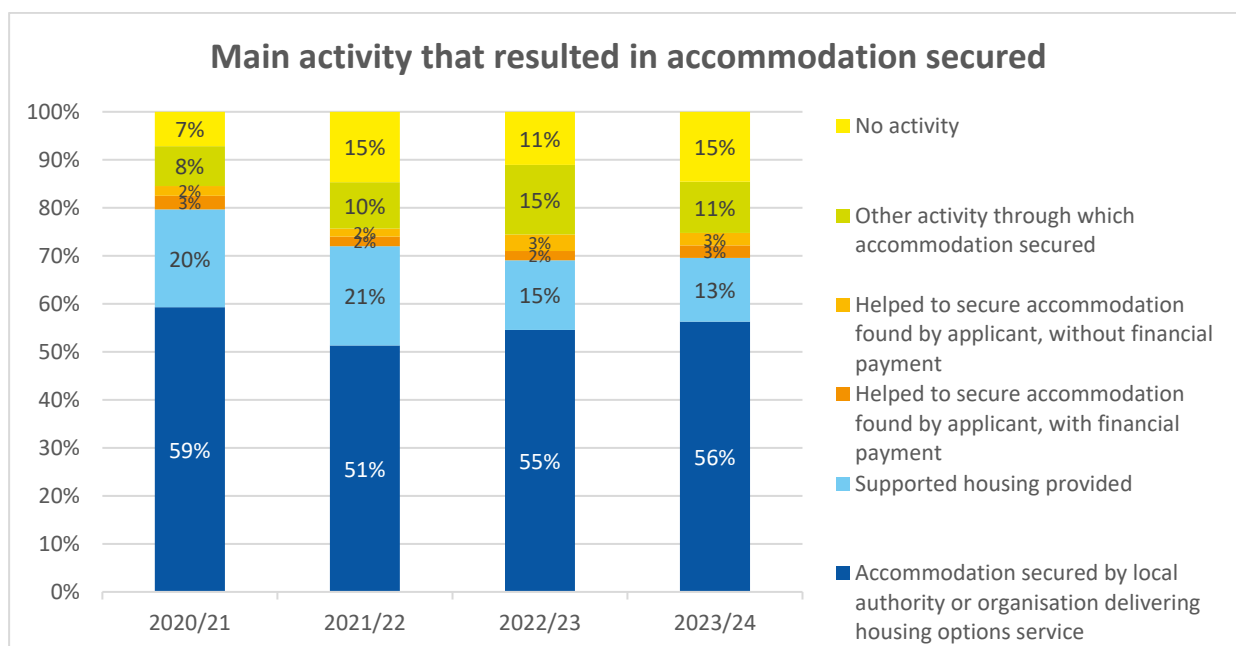


5.16 The data shows a growing reliance on the **social rented sector**, with the proportion of households accommodated there increasing from **68% in 2021/22** to **75% in 2023/24**, reflecting a strong dependence on social housing as a solution to homelessness.

5.17 Additionally, there has been a slight rise from 15% to 17% in households housed in the **private rented sector**, while all other accommodation outcomes have decreased.

5.18 Furthermore, there has been a complete elimination of '**not known**' outcomes, indicating improved tracking and clarity in accommodation outcomes.



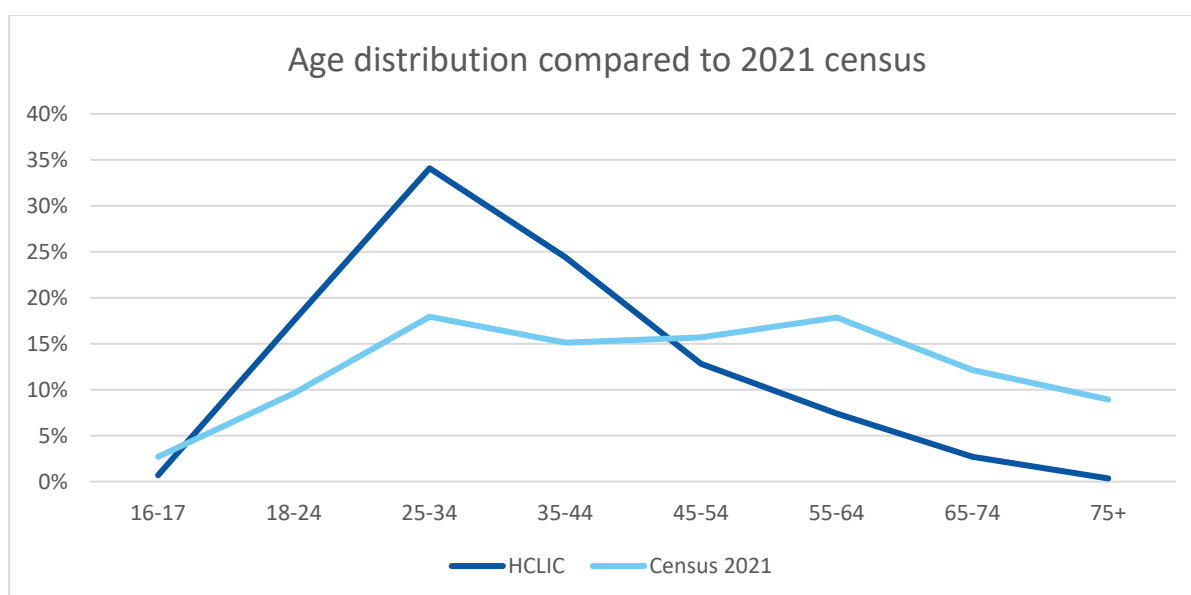


5.19 Broadly the spread of activities that have resulted in accommodation being secured at the end of a relief duty have remained steady across the four years, with accommodation being secured by the local authority or housing options service having been consistently the most effective activity in terms of relief duty accommodation outcomes.

5.20 There has been a decrease in the number of supported housing accommodation outcomes from 21% to 13% in the most recent year, suggesting either reduced utilisation or availability of supported accommodation for vulnerable clients.

## 6. Demographics

### Age

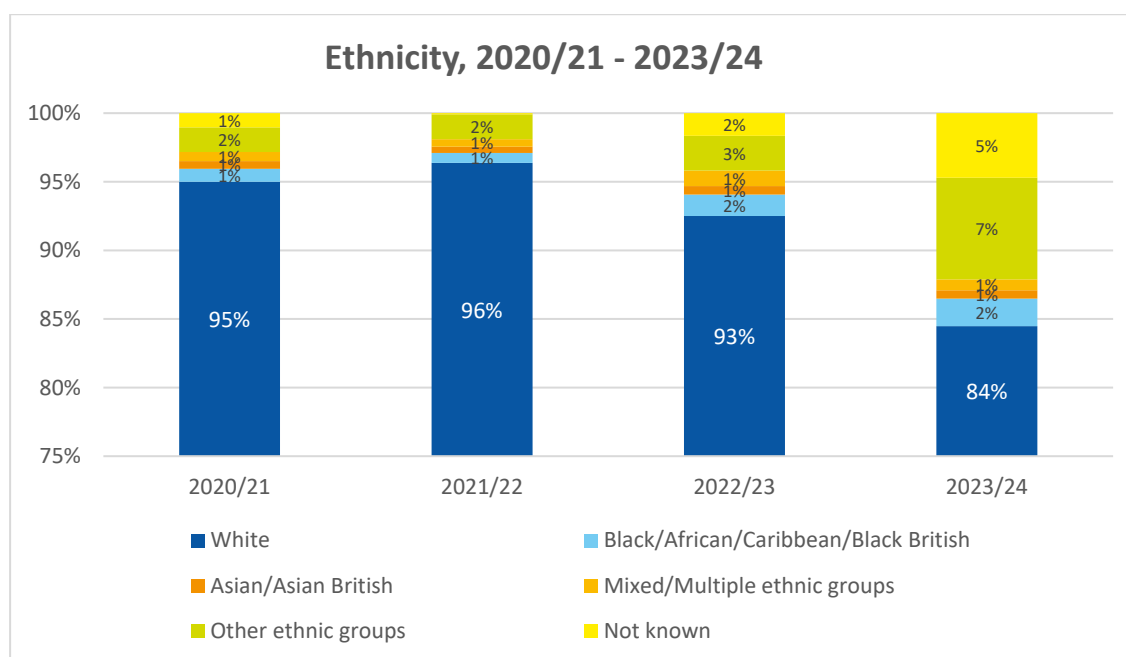


6.1 The age distribution of households owed either a prevention or a relief duty in Knowsley shows a strong negative skew towards younger age groups when compared to the age

distribution of the 2021 census. This indicates that homelessness is disproportionately affecting younger groups locally. The biggest cohort by age presenting for prevention or relief duty as recorded on H-CLIC is those aged 18-25. Further analysis of MainStay data by age 16-24 shows that there has been a steady increase in assessments for accommodation from 154 in 2021/22 to 195 in 2022/23, and 211 completed assessments in 2023/24.

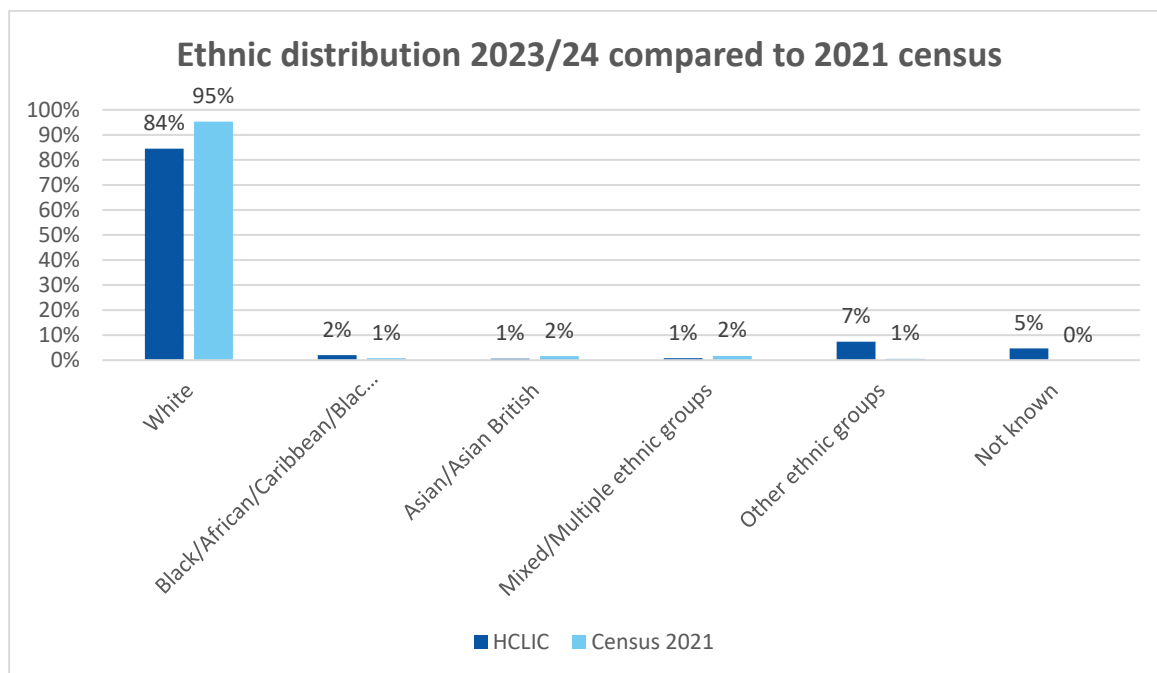
- 6.2 Of those assessed the biggest needs were around mental health (39% (83) in 2023/24), substance misuse (16%, (33) in 2023/24) and offending 10% (22) in 2023/24. However, 53% (82) in 2021/22, 58% (113) in 2022/23 and 77% (162) in 2023/24 had other needs, which on MainStay are defined as requiring support with Financial; Family and or Relationships; Vulnerability; Self-Care and Living Skills; Managing Money; Social Networks and Relationships; Meaningful Use of Time. This would indicate a need to look at the range of housing and support available to young people to support them to succeed as adults.

## Ethnicity



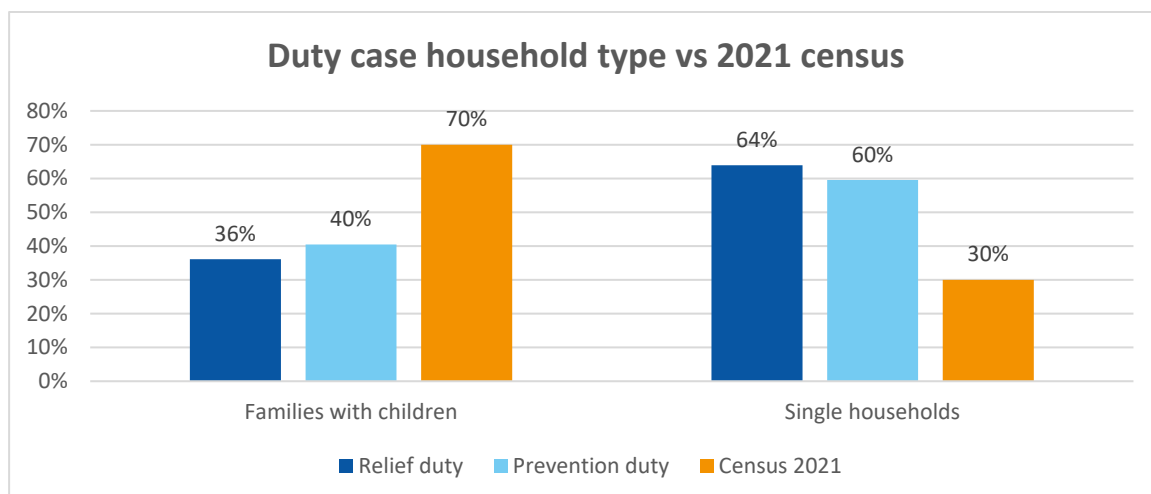
- 6.3 Households of white ethnic backgrounds have consistently comprised a majority of homelessness duty cases, however there is a growing minority of duty cases relating to households of 'other ethnic groups'<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Other ethnic groups include: Arab and 'Any other ethnic group'. There is no further clarification of ethnicity provided by the source data.

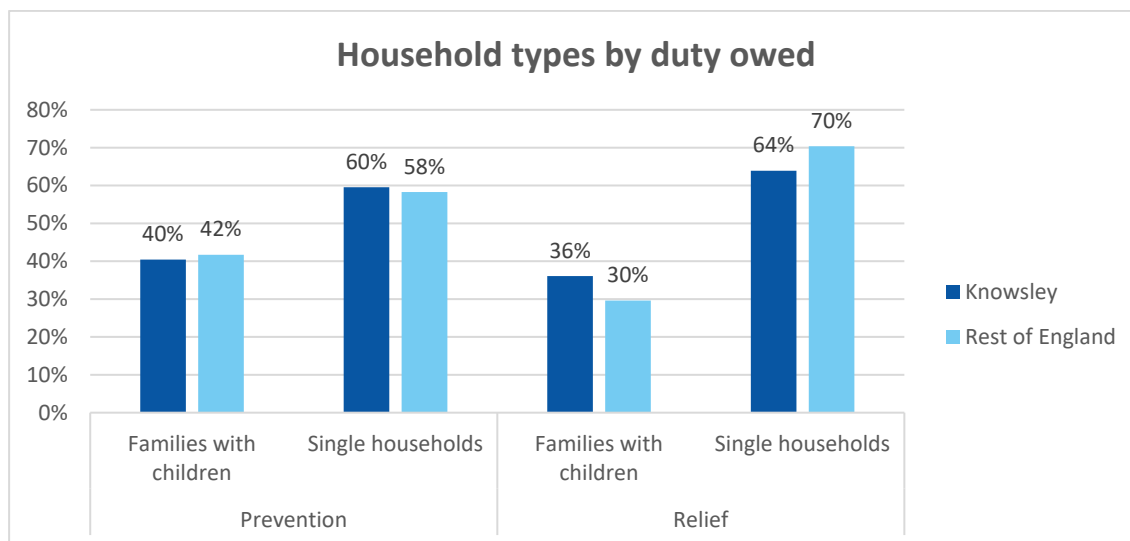


- 6.4 When compared to data from the 2021 census, the ethnic distribution of households owed a homelessness duty appears largely representative of the local population demographics. However, in the most recent financial year, there has been a slight underrepresentation of White ethnic groups, alongside a corresponding overrepresentation of 'other ethnic groups' at 7%, compared to just 1% in the census. This is possibly as a result of the increase in leave to remain decisions made by the Home Office which has required asylum seekers to leave hotels.

### Household composition



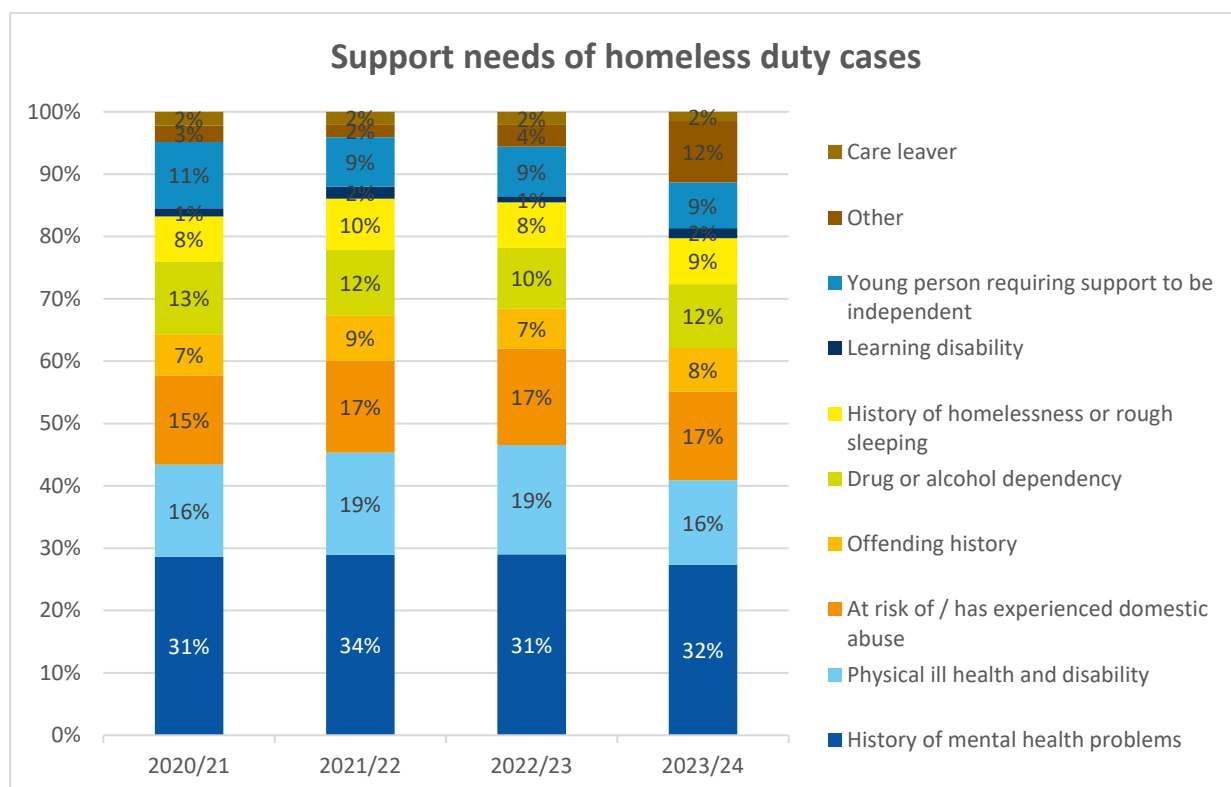
- 6.5 There is a significant overrepresentation of single households across both prevention and relief duty cases when compared to the figures from the 2021 census, and a comparative under-representation of family households containing dependent children.



- 6.6 This is nonetheless in line with the national picture, where single households constitute the majority of homelessness cases under both prevention and relief duties. Despite representing only 30% of the general population, single households account for **58% of all prevention duty cases** and **70% of all relief duty cases** across the rest of England, highlighting their disproportionate vulnerability to homelessness.

## 7. Households with support needs

- 7.1 Two sources of data have been used to examine vulnerable households who are at risk of or become homeless. These are the H-CLIC data and data drawn from the LCRCA MainStay system. The MainStay system assists Adult Services commissioners with pathway management, contract and performance management including measuring KPI's, for all commissioned homeless services which are obliged to use the system across LCRCA. MainStay tracks data on single households in supported housing and floating support services across the Liverpool City Region.
- 7.2 Information on support needs drawn from H-CLIC shows that over the past four years, households owed a homelessness duty with a history of mental health problems have consistently represented the largest subgroup of support needs, reaching **32% in 2023/24**. The next most common support needs are **physical ill health or disability**, closely followed by **experience of domestic abuse**.



- 7.3 While most support need categories have remained stable, there has been notable growth in the **'other support needs'**<sup>25</sup> category during 2023/24, warranting further investigation to understand its drivers.

## MainStay data

- 7.4 MainStay collects data on how needs are assessed and how individuals are prioritised and connected to the appropriate support services. The data reveals trends in demand for supported accommodation services as well as floating support from 2021/22 to 2023/24<sup>26,27</sup>.

## Supported accommodation assessment and risk

- 7.5 The number of supported accommodation assessments fluctuated over the three-year period, dropping from 798 in 2021/22 to 664 in 2022/23 (a 16.8% decrease), then rising sharply to 942 in 2023/24 (a 41.8% increase from the previous year).
- 7.6 All clients assessed through the MainStay recording system are assigned a priority level ranging from 1 to 7, where priority 1 indicates the highest level of need and priority 7 the

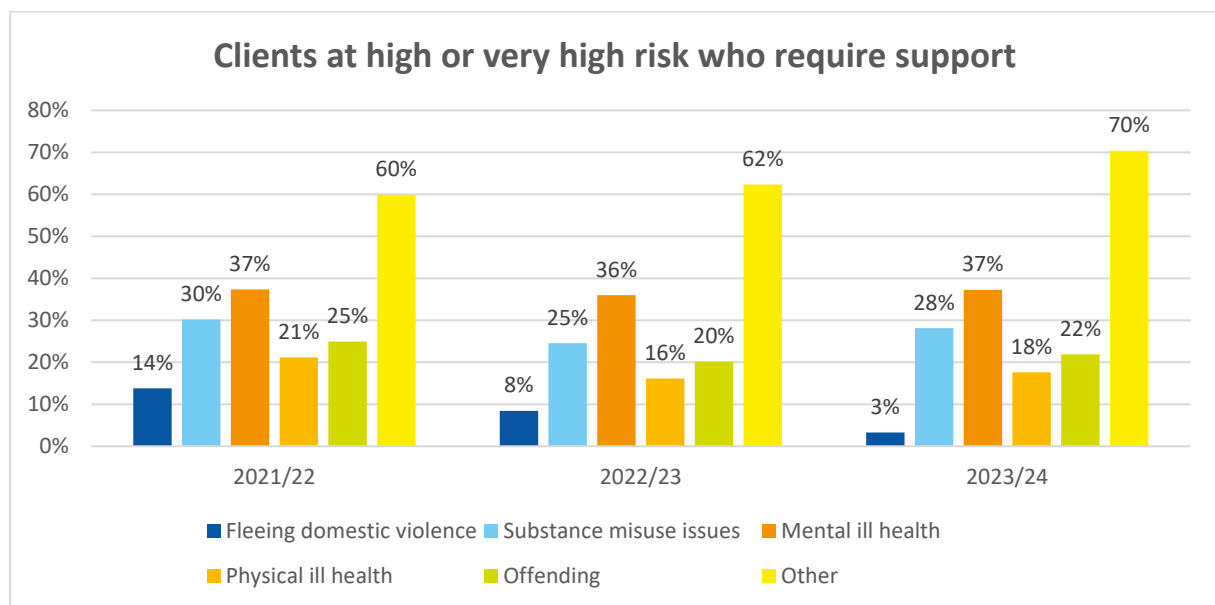
<sup>25</sup> Other support needs include: Access to education, employment or training; At risk of / has experienced sexual abuse / exploitation; Old age; Young person aged 16-17 years; Young parent requiring support to manage independently; former asylum seeker; served in HM forces; Victim of modern slavery; difficulties budgeting

<sup>26</sup> It is not possible to track clients through the system, so figures represented in this analysis may include clients that appear across multiple years of data or who may experience multiple episodes of homelessness within a single year, potentially leading to them being captured more than once in the annual aggregate data.

<sup>27</sup> Note also that clients included in the Mainstay cohort will also have been captured in the HCLIC figures in section 4 of this report. Mainstay clients represent a sub-group of the larger homeless cohort who require supported accommodation or floating support.

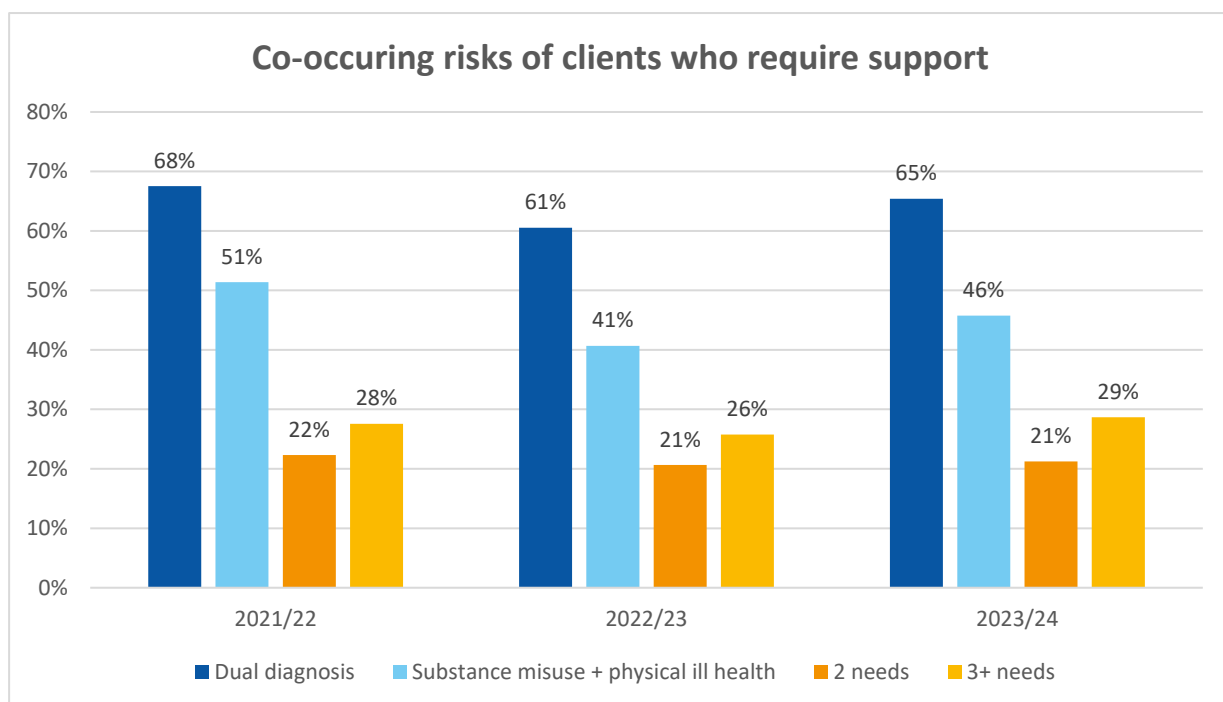
lowest. Clients in priority level 2 are considered statutorily homeless, while those in priority level 4 are identified as rough sleepers.

- 7.7 Clients assigned to priority levels 5 through 7 on the Mainstay recording system are not deemed eligible for accommodation. These levels are typically reserved for individuals with lower levels of need or urgency, meaning their circumstances do not meet the threshold for housing support services. The number of those assessed in priority 5-7 ranged from 391 individuals, 49% of all assessments in 2021/22, to 565 individuals, 61% of all assessments in 2023/24.

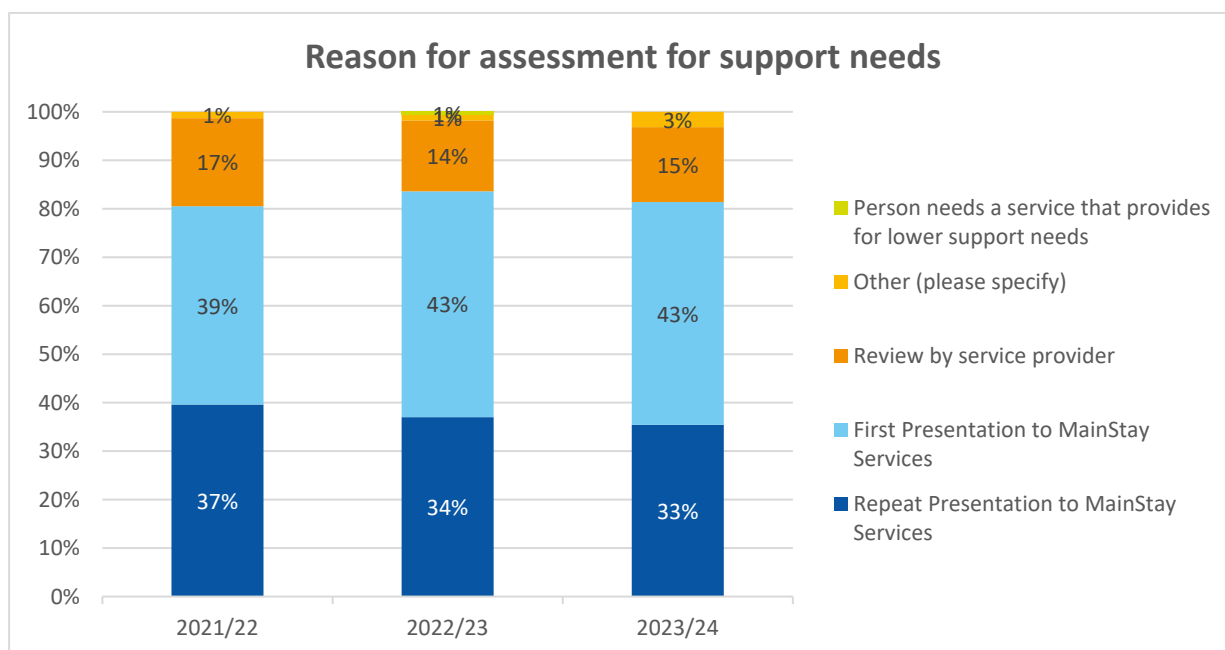


- 7.8 **Mental ill health** remained the most prevalent high-risk factor at 37% in 2021/22 (298) and 2023/24 (351), highlighting its ongoing significance.
- 7.9 **Substance misuse** also remained a major issue, fluctuating slightly but staying relatively consistent at between 25-30%.
- 7.10 **Fleeing domestic violence** dropped sharply from 14% (110) in 2021/22 to just 3% (31) in 2023/24, suggesting a shift in the nature of risk factors, though this is likely to be a data recording issue rather than a real decrease as all stakeholder feedback indicates an increasing need for DA support and provision and H-CLIC data indicates that for 17.7% of cases DA is the main support need.
- 7.11 The most significant change in risk factors was the rise in "**Other**"<sup>28</sup> risk categories, which grew from 60% (478) in 2021/22 to 70% (663) in 2023/24. This indicates an increase in the range of client needs beyond the primary categories.

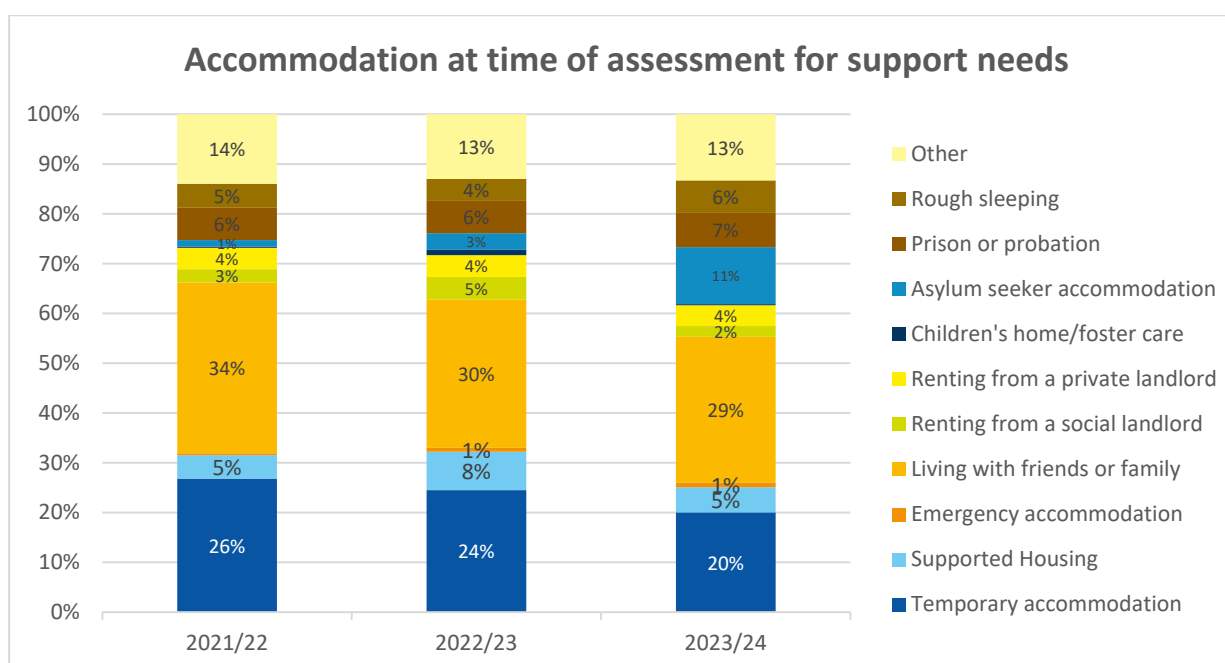
<sup>28</sup> **Other risks** include: Financial; Family and or Relationships; Vulnerability; Self-Care and Living Skills; Managing Money; Social Networks and Relationships; Meaningful Use of Time



- 7.12 The data reveals that a significant proportion of clients have multiple high-risk factors, underscoring the complexity and higher needs within the supported accommodation system.
- 7.13 **Clients with a dual diagnosis** of substance misuse and mental health issues have accounted for a significant majority of all assessments between 2021/22 and the most recent financial year, peaking at 68% in 2021/22 but remaining consistently high with 65% dual-diagnosis clients in 2023/24. This highlights an ongoing significance of addressing mental health and substance misuse together as frequently co-occurring risks.
- 7.14 **Clients with substance misuse issues and physical ill health** also account for a large proportion of cases over the period, peaking at 51% in 2021/22 but remaining consistently high with 431 (46%) clients falling into this category in 2023/24.
- 7.15 **Clients with two high-risk categories** made up 21% of assessments in 2023/24. This group represents a substantial proportion of the overall client base, with 200 clients falling into this category in 2023/24.
- 7.16 **Clients with three or more high-risk categories** are even more prevalent, comprising 28% of assessments in 2021/22, and rising to 29% in 2023/24. This equated to 270 clients in 2023/24. This increase suggests a slightly growing trend of complex clients.



- 7.17 The data shows a decline in **repeat presentations**, dropping from 37% in 2021/22 to 33% in 2023/24, indicating fewer clients returning for support.
- 7.18 This has been replaced by an increase in **first-time presentations**, rising from 39% in 2021/22 to 43% in 2023/24. The rise in first-time clients suggests an increase in new individuals facing housing instability, potentially reflecting broader societal factors, such as economic pressures or housing shortages.



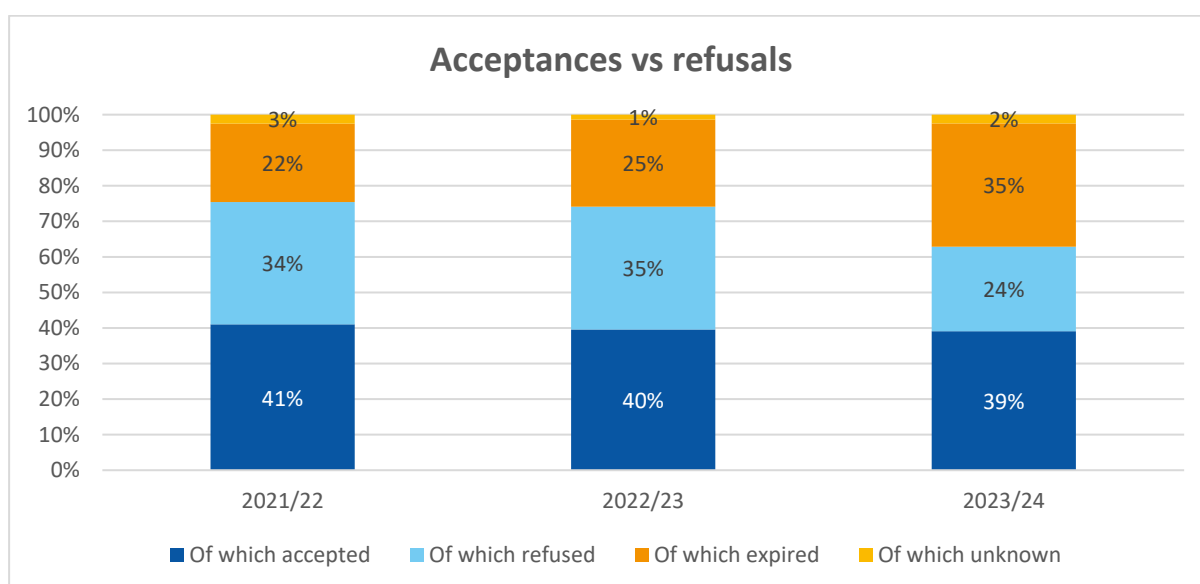
- 7.19 In 2023/24 96% of assessments were for clients living in the Knowsley area, whilst 2% came from Liverpool and the remaining 2% were unknown.
- 7.20 Key trends in accommodation at the time of assessment show a decline in the proportion of clients living in **temporary accommodation**, from 26% in 2021/22 to 20% in 2023/24.



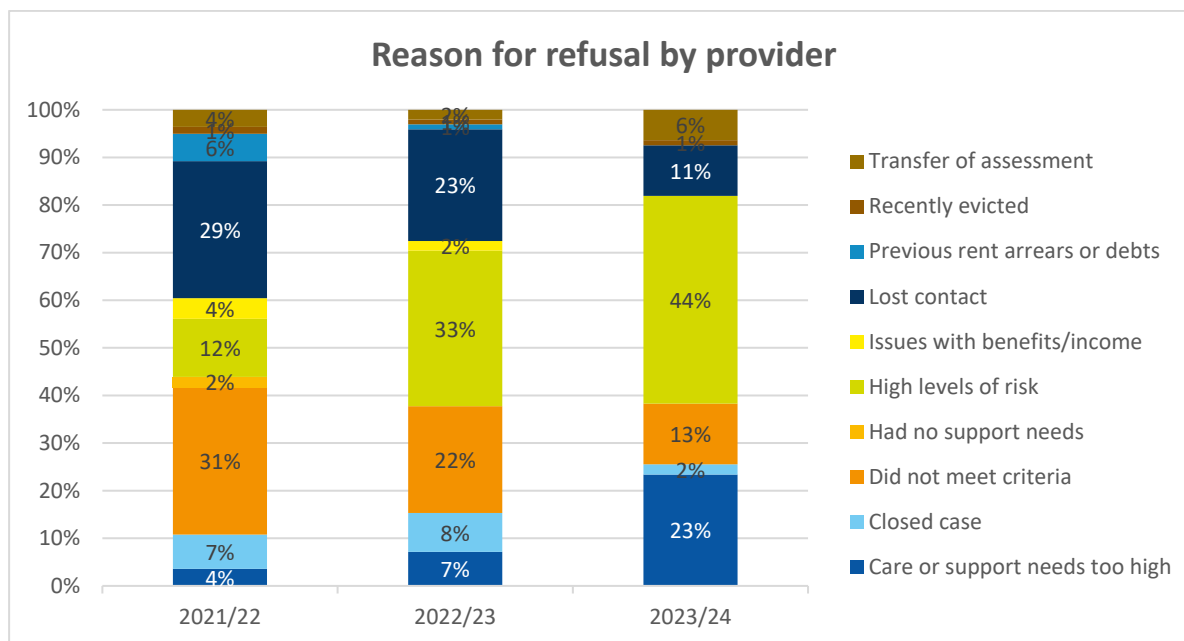
- 7.21 The largest group remained clients living with **friends or family**, though it decreased slightly from 34% to 29%. The number of clients in **supported housing** remained stable, while those in **emergency accommodation** increased slightly.
- 7.22 A significant rise was seen in the number of clients living in **asylum seeker accommodation**, from 1% to 11%.
- 7.23 The proportion of clients **rough sleeping** also increased, from 4% to 6%.

### Supported accommodation referrals

- 7.24 Onward referrals to accommodation after initial assessments declined both in absolute terms, from 675 to 611 between 2021/22 and 2023/24, and as a proportion of total assessments, dropping from 84.6% to 64.9%.

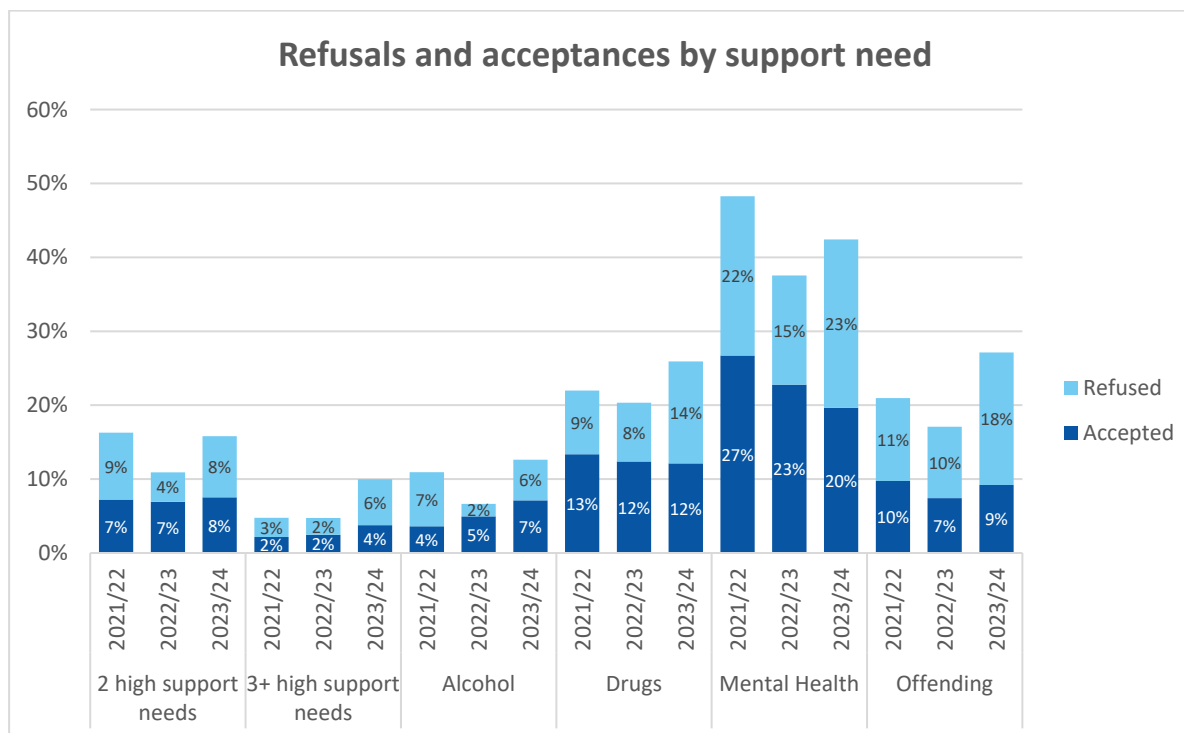


- 7.25 Referral outcomes show a **consistent acceptance rate** of 39–41% across years, indicating stability in service uptake. Refusals declined from 34% in 2021/22 to 24% in 2023/24, while expired referrals rose, from 22% to 35%. It should be noted that this figure includes people who have been accommodated and those who have stopped engaging with support, so it is not possible to determine how many ceases to engage. Unknown outcomes remained minimal.



7.26 Refusals due to service provider decisions have declined from 21% in 2021/22 to 15% in 2023/24.

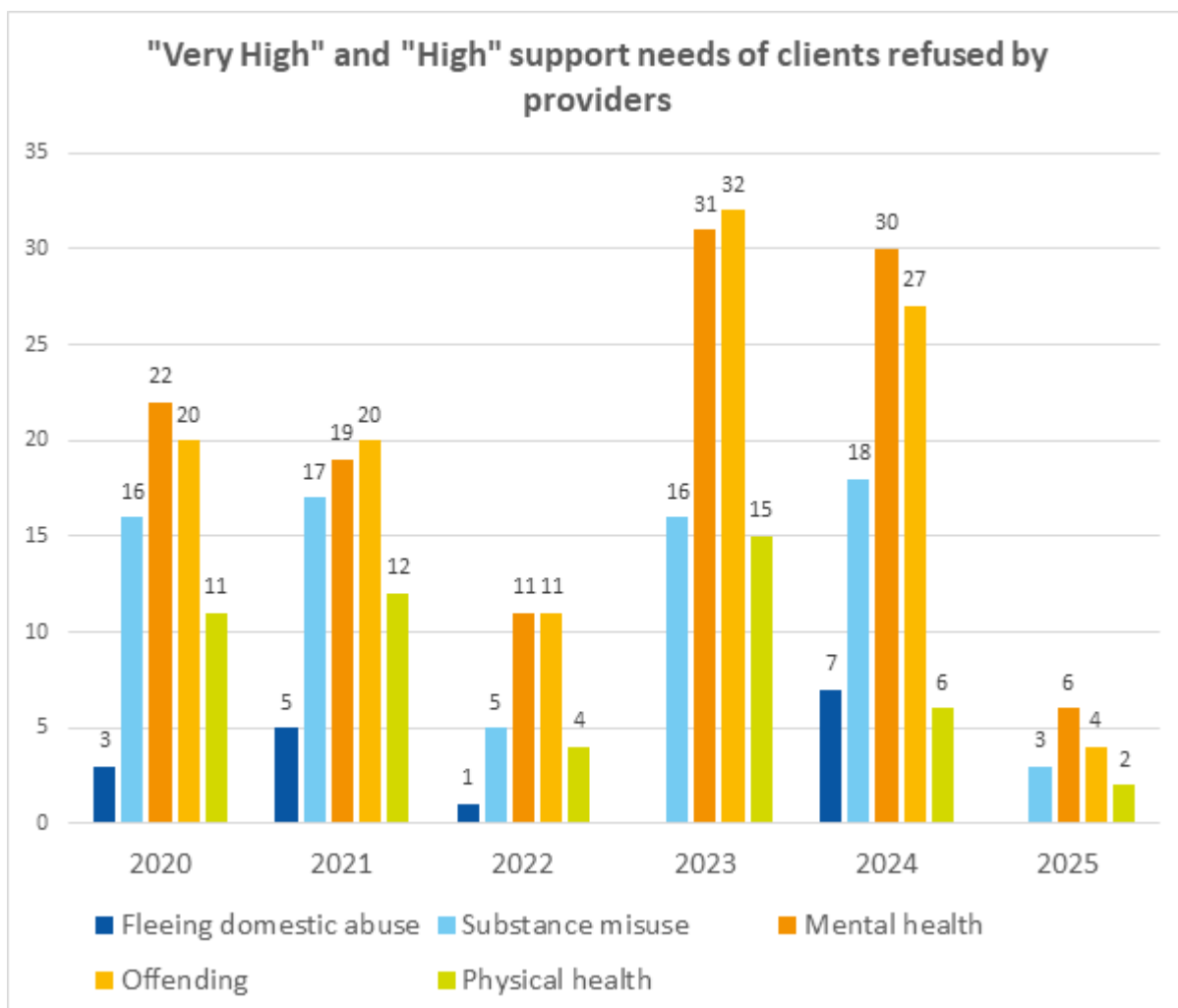
7.27 However, among service provider refusals, cases citing clients as a "high level of risk" rose sharply from 12% in 2021/22 (17 cases) to 44% in 2023/24 (41 cases), while those with "care or support needs too high" increased from 4% (5 cases) to 23% (22 cases). Combined, these reasons accounted for a **majority (67% and 63 cases) in 2023/24**, highlighting a growing trend of more complex and high-needs clients being refused. This underscores potential gaps in service capacity to accommodate individuals requiring intensive care or posing significant risks.



7.28 The data highlights increasing challenges in addressing high-support needs. Cases with two needs remained steady at 16% in 2023/24, evenly split between acceptances and refusals.

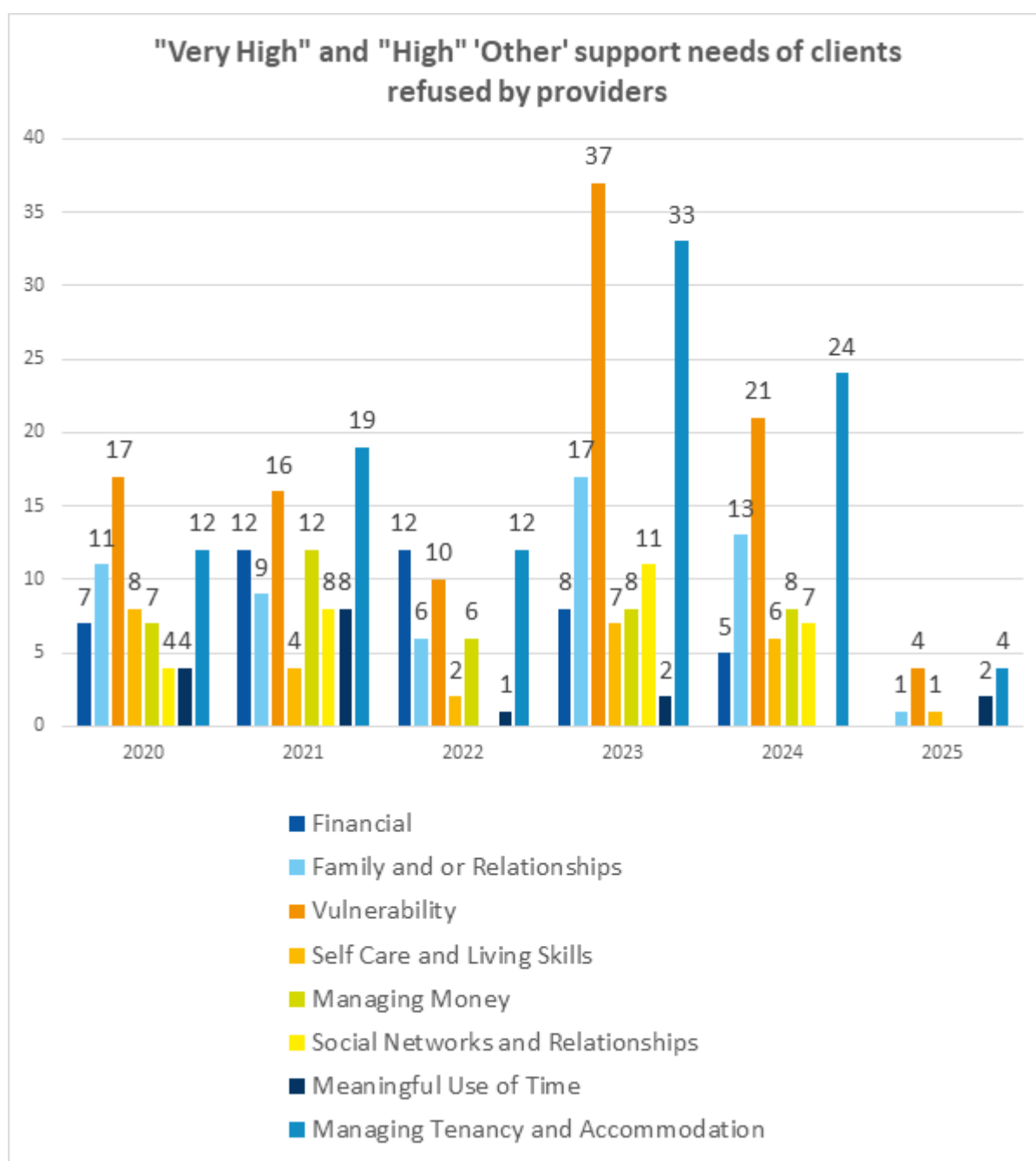
However, cases with three or more needs doubled from 5% to 10%, with refusals consistently exceeding acceptances, reflecting barriers for complex clients.

- 7.29 Mental health cases, the largest group (43% in 2023/24), show declining acceptance and rising refusals. Similarly, clients with offending histories face growing rejection rates, rising to 18% by 2023/24.
- 7.30 Further analysis of the types of High and Very High needs leading to refusals over five years show mental health and offending (general) consistently emerge as the leading reasons for refusal, indicating that these support needs pose the greatest challenge to accommodation providers.



- 7.31 Of those refused by providers for having support needs that were too high, a total of 23 had co-occurring substance misuse and physical ill health issues over the five-year period, averaging at 4.4 individuals each year with a peak of 7 in 2021.
- 7.32 Of those refused accommodation due to having 'Very high' or 'High' offending needs, violence (40 cases) and sexual offences (18 cases), are key factors that make securing housing particularly difficult. Individuals with these offences often face significant barriers to placement due to risk concerns, both for housing providers and the wider community.

- 7.33 'Other' support needs also contribute to a large number of refusals by providers. The most significant 'other' factors contributing to refusals are vulnerability (105 cases) and managing tenancy and accommodation (104 cases).
- 7.34 The data also shows an upward trend in vulnerability-related challenges. The number of individuals flagged as vulnerable (105 cases overall) and struggling with self-care and living skills (28 cases) suggests an increasing need for intensive support services within housing provisions. Notably, vulnerability peaked in 2023 (37 cases), indicating a potential rise in complex cases requiring intervention.

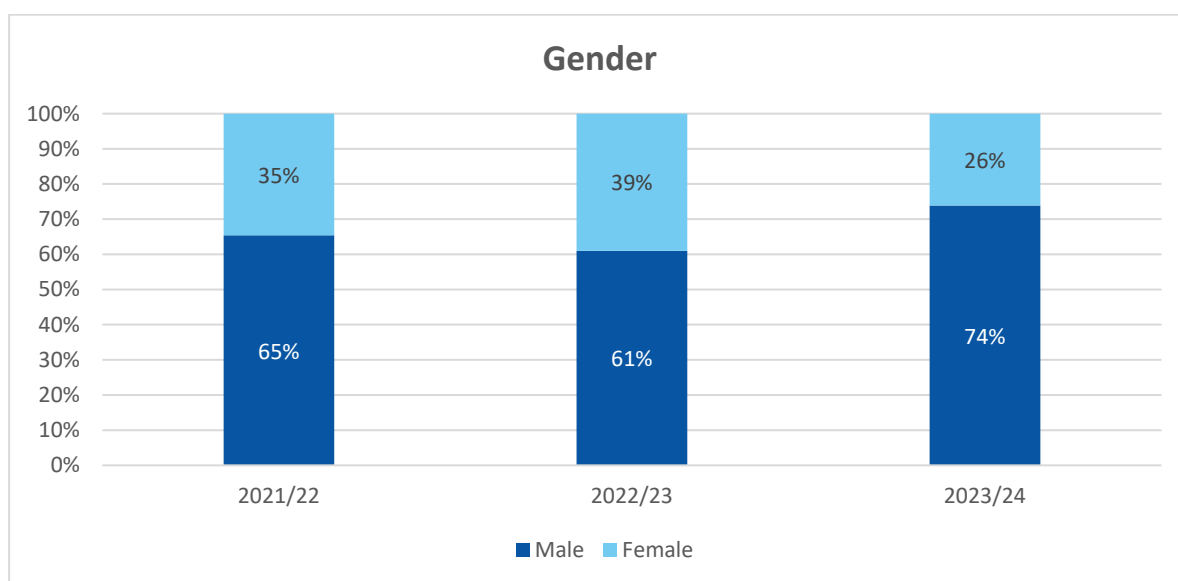


- 7.35 Additionally, financial difficulties (44 cases) and managing money (28 cases) played a notable role in refusals, with financial issues particularly prevalent in 2021 and 2022 (12 cases each).

The ability to manage finances effectively appears to be a barrier for many, indicating a need for financial literacy and budgeting support to improve long-term housing stability. Self-care and living skills (28 cases) also contributed to refusals, peaking in 2023 (7 cases), suggesting that daily living challenges such as hygiene, meal preparation, and personal care are a barrier to securing housing.

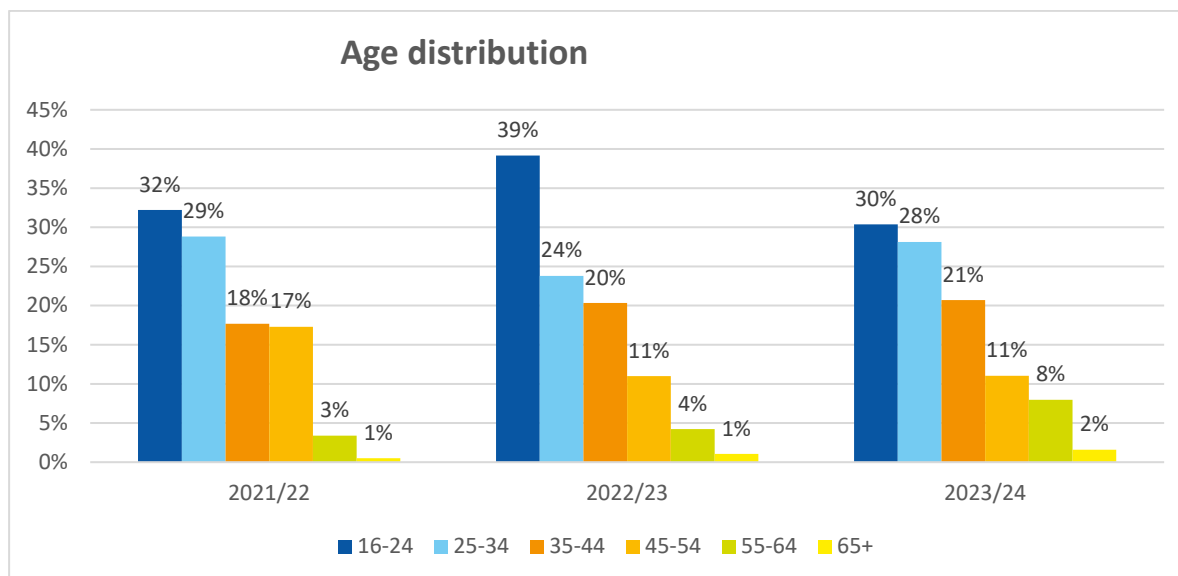
- 7.36 The data indicates that there is an average of 20 individuals a year being refused due to their needs being too high and self-care and living skills affects 6-10 individuals. There are 16-18 cases a year of people with substance misuse refused a service and 6-12 people with physical health needs refused a service.

### Demographic profile of MainStay cohort

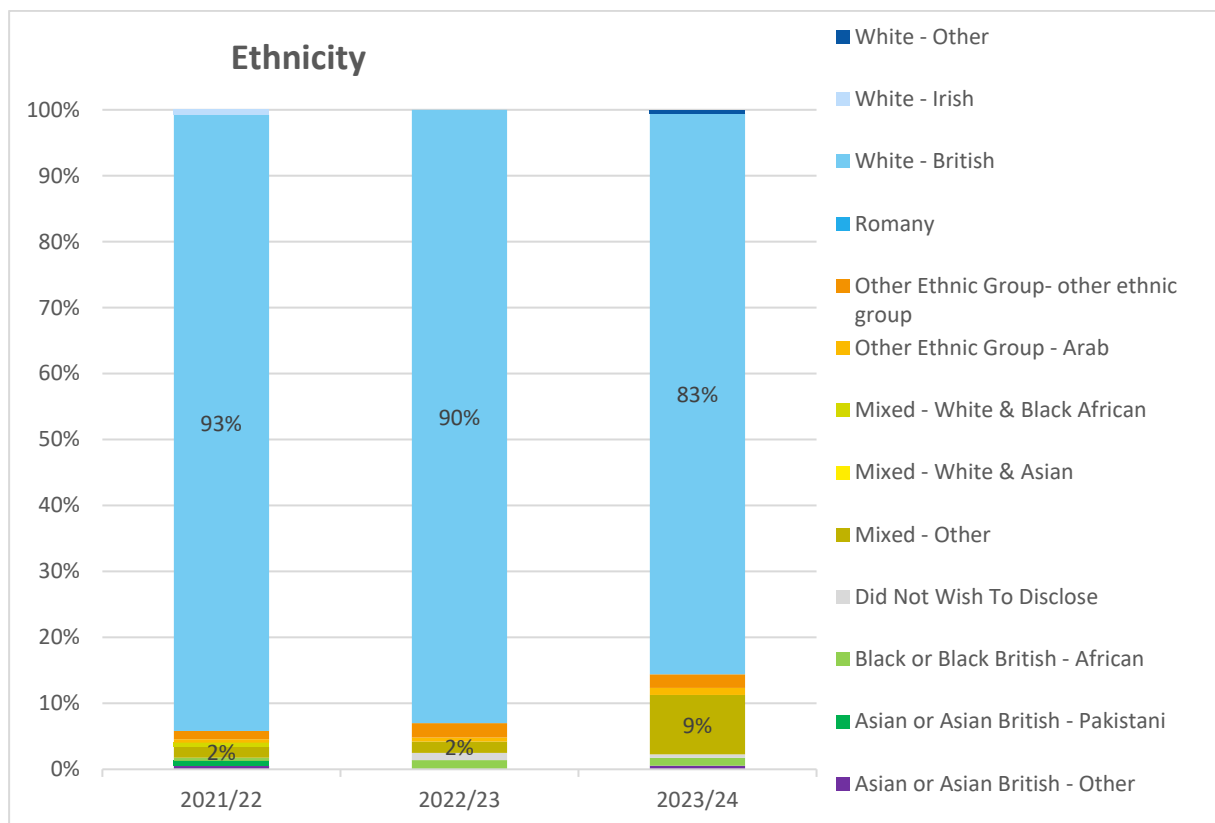


- 7.37 The data shows a consistent male skew in assessments, with men making up 65% in 2021/22, 61% in 2022/23, and 74% in 2023/24. This suggests that homelessness disproportionately affects men, with There has been a noticeable increase in the proportion of male clients over the three-year period. However, it is important to consider that women's homelessness, including rough sleeping, is often more hidden, meaning the data may not fully capture the extent of female homelessness<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> [Women's Rough Sleeping Census - Solace Women's Aid](#)

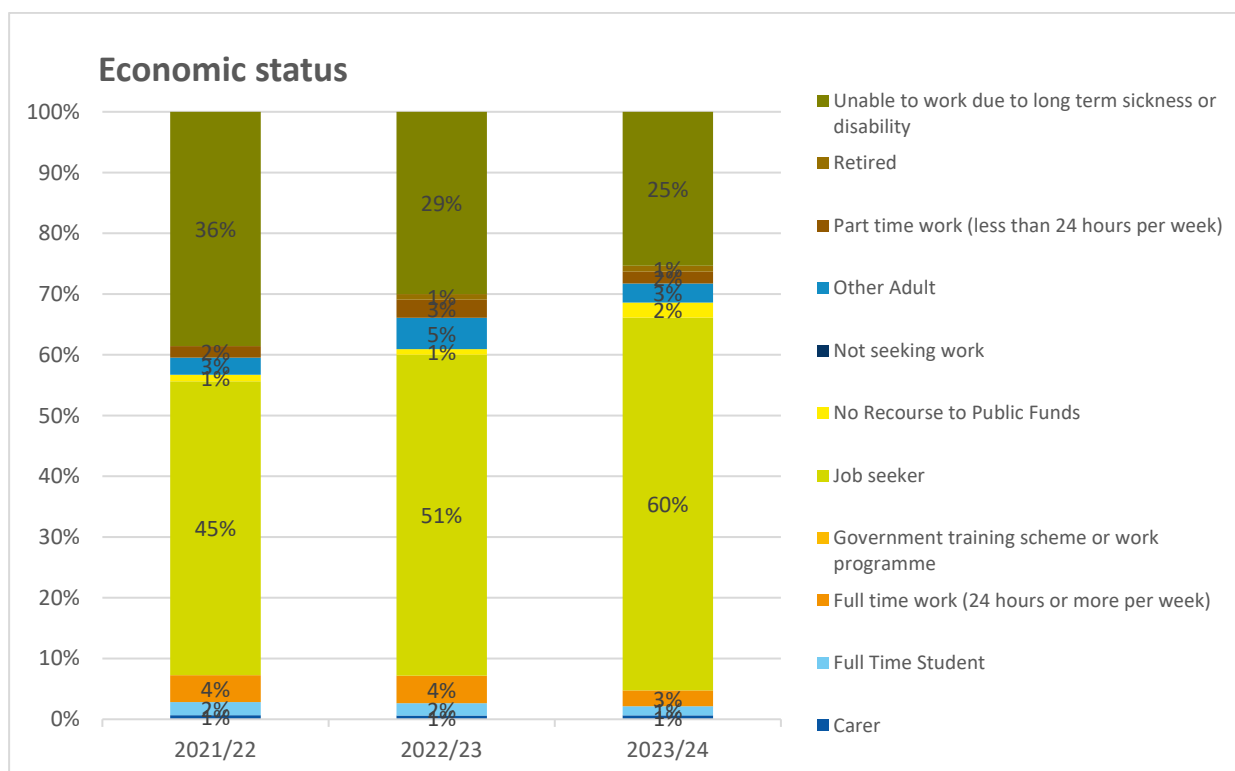


- 7.38 The **16-24** age group consistently accounted for the largest proportion of assessments, making up 32% in 2021/22, 39% in 2022/23, and 30% in 2023/24. The **25-34** age group fluctuated but remained significant. This indicates a strong skew towards younger clients, reflecting that homelessness continues to significantly impact younger people. Despite a slight decrease in 2023/24, this age group remains the most affected. These figures are also reflected in the analysis of H-CLIC data (6.1-6.2 above)
- 7.39 Other age groups, particularly those 35 and older are showing growing trends in both numbers and their proportion within the cohort, but younger adults still represent the largest share of those seeking supported accommodation.
- 7.40 Notably, the **55-64** group increased from 3% to 8%, reflecting a rise in homelessness among older adults. This highlights a shift towards older clients facing housing instability.

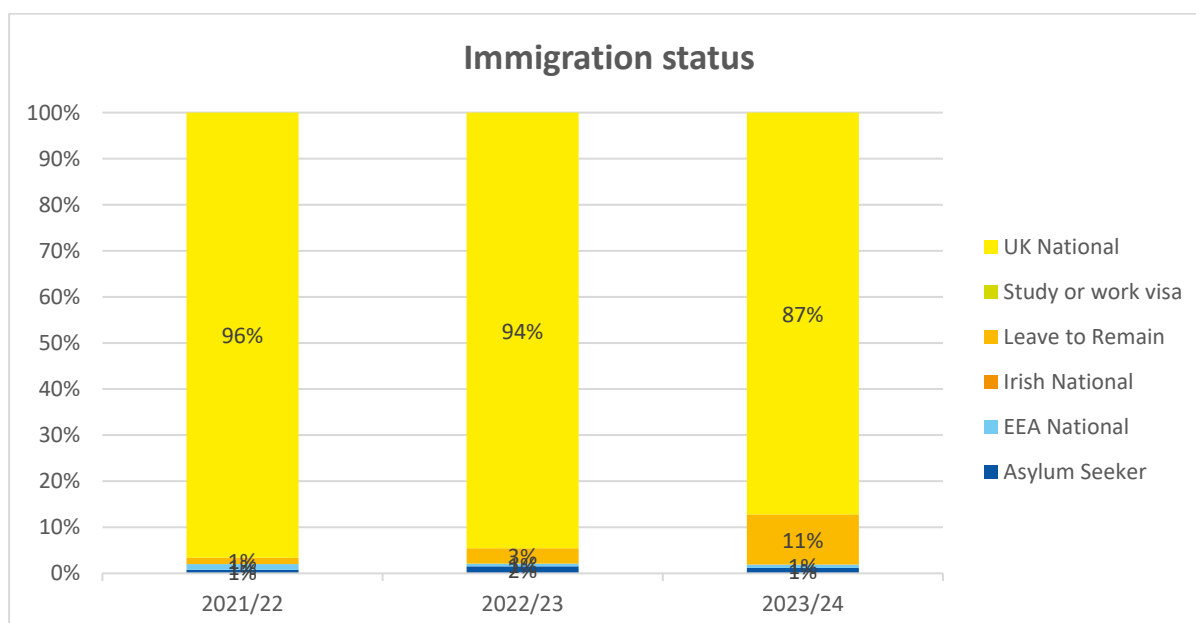


7.41 The data shows a decline in **White British** clients, from 93% in 2021/22 to 83% in 2023/24, while the proportion of **other ethnicities** has increased. The **Mixed-Other** group, in particular, grew from 2% to 9%. This shows a growing diversity in the client base, despite Knowsley remaining a predominantly White British area<sup>30</sup>, and may be linked to the increase in the number of assessed individuals living in asylum seeker accommodation.

<sup>30</sup> [Ethnic group, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)



- 7.42 Job seekers now represent the largest group, rising from 45% in 2021/22 to 60% in 2023/24, while those unable to work due to long-term sickness or disability fell from 36% to 25%. This shift primarily reflects a decrease in clients unable to work, as the proportion of those in employment has remained relatively stable over the period.
- 7.43 **Full-time work** and **part-time work** remained low but stable, with small fluctuations.
- 7.44 The proportion with **no recourse to public funds** increased from 1% to 2%, indicating a slight rise in clients facing financial restrictions.

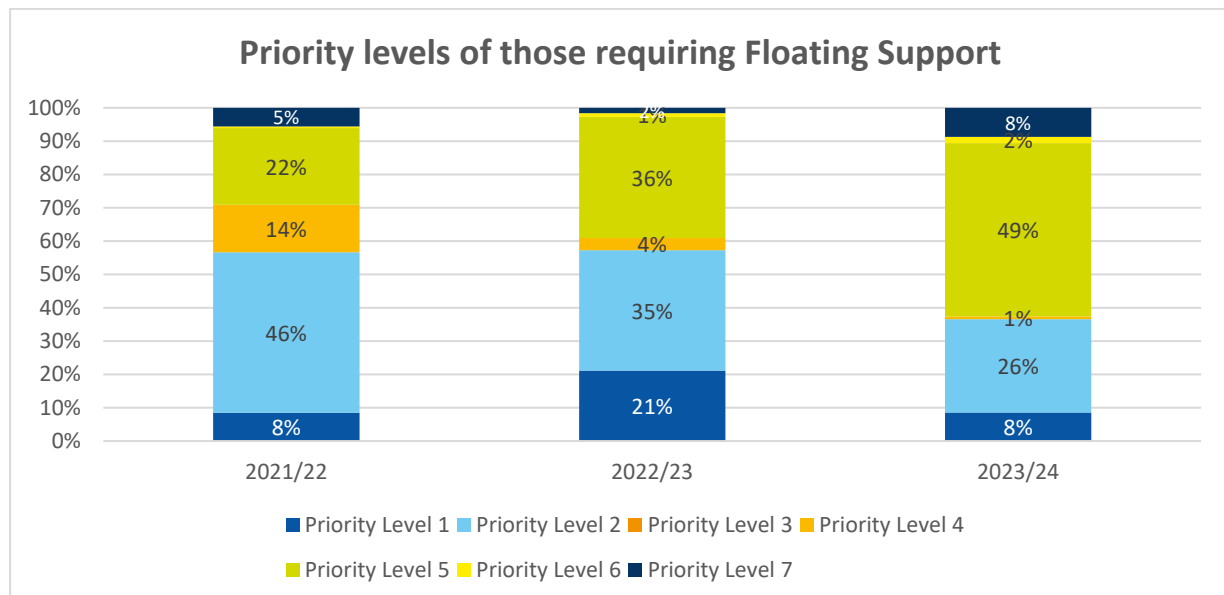




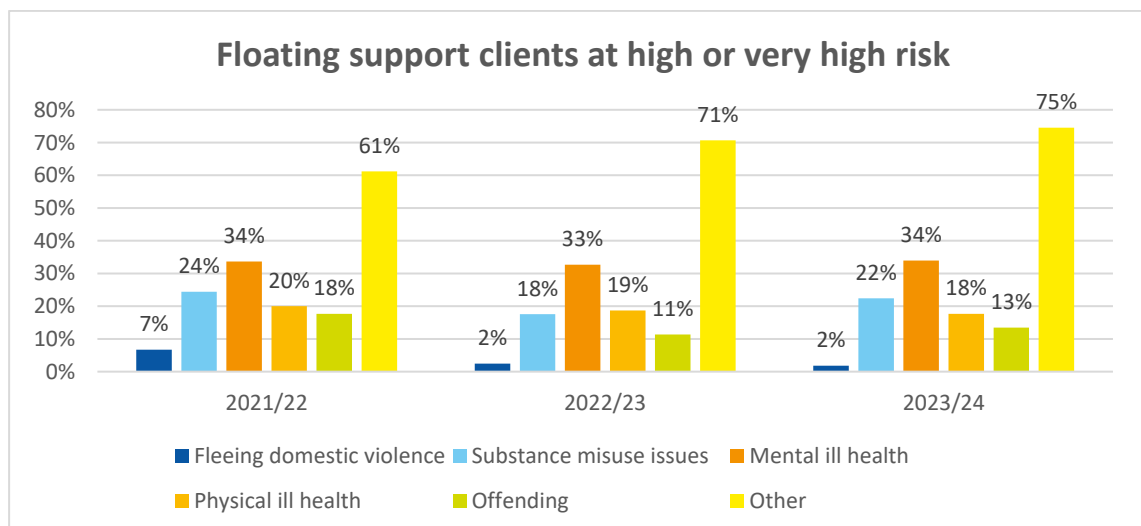
- 7.45 The immigration status data shows a predominance of **UK Nationals**, consistently making up the largest group (96% in 2021/22, 94% in 2022/23, and 87% in 2023/24).
- 7.46 However, there is a notable increase in **Leave to Remain** clients, rising from 1% to 11%, suggesting a growing number of individuals granted residency. The proportion of **Asylum Seekers** also rose slightly from 1% to 2%, while the percentage of **EEA Nationals** and **Irish Nationals** remained stable.

## Floating Support

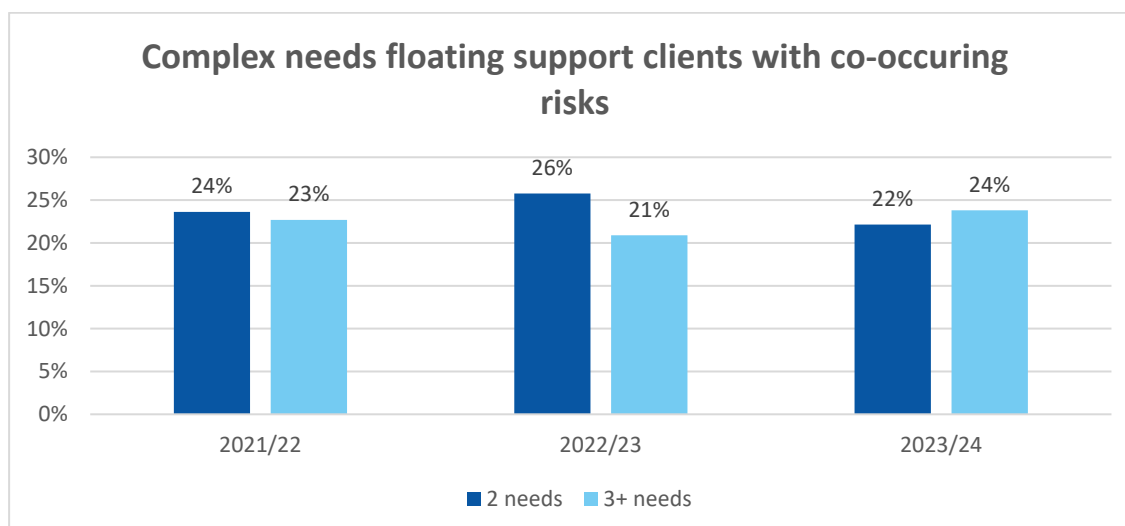
- 7.47 The data shows fluctuations in **floating support assessments** over the three years: 639 in 2021/22, 450 in 2022/23, and a significant increase to 781 in 2023/24. The rise in 2023/24 suggests a greater demand for floating support services, potentially reflecting a growing need for flexible, community-based assistance.



- 7.48 The data highlights a significant growth in those with **lower support needs** among those assessed for floating support services, with Priority Level 7 rising from 2% in 2022/23 to 8% in 2023/24. Priority Level 5, consistently the largest category, increased from 36% to 49% in the same period.
- 7.49 Higher support needs (Priority Levels 2 and 1) declined overall, showing a reduced proportion of less intensive cases being referred to floating support services.

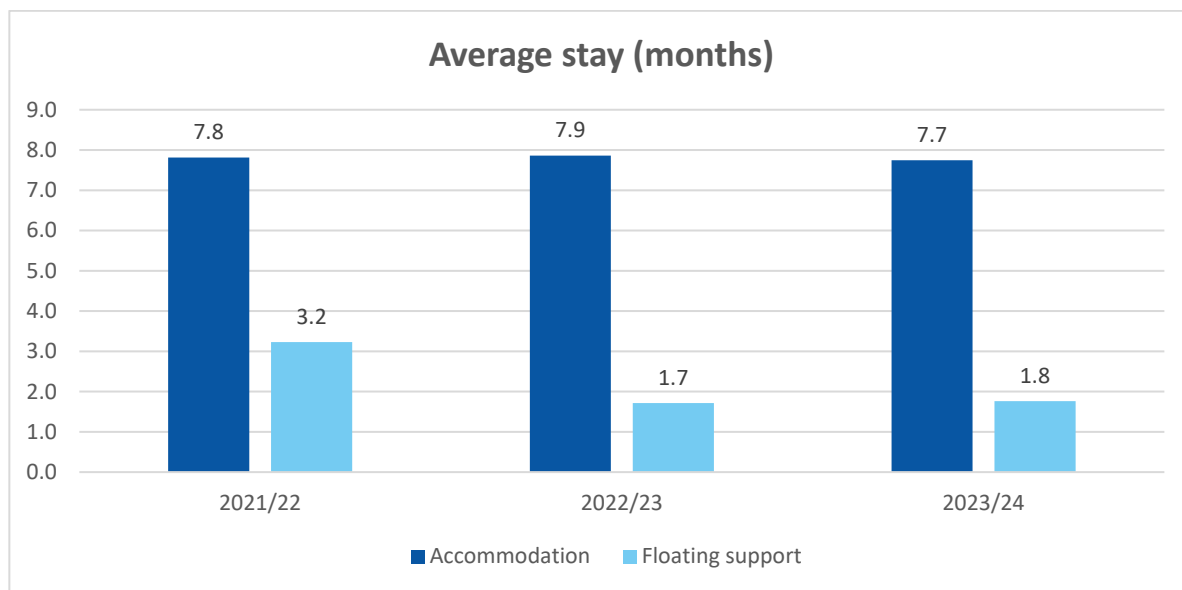


- 7.50 Key trends show that **mental ill health** consistently accounts for the highest proportion of identified risks (besides "other"), remaining at 34% in 2021/22 and 2023/24.
- 7.51 **Substance misuse** risks, the next highest, declined to 18% in 2022/23 but rose to 22% in 2023/24.
- 7.52 **Physical ill health** and **offending** saw slight decreases over time, while **fleeing domestic violence** dropped significantly to just 2%.
- 7.53 The "other" category grew sharply, rising from 61% to 75%, indicating a broadening range of risks including financial, Family and or Relationships, Vulnerability, Self-Care and Living Skills, Managing Money, Social Networks and Relationships and Meaningful Use of Time.

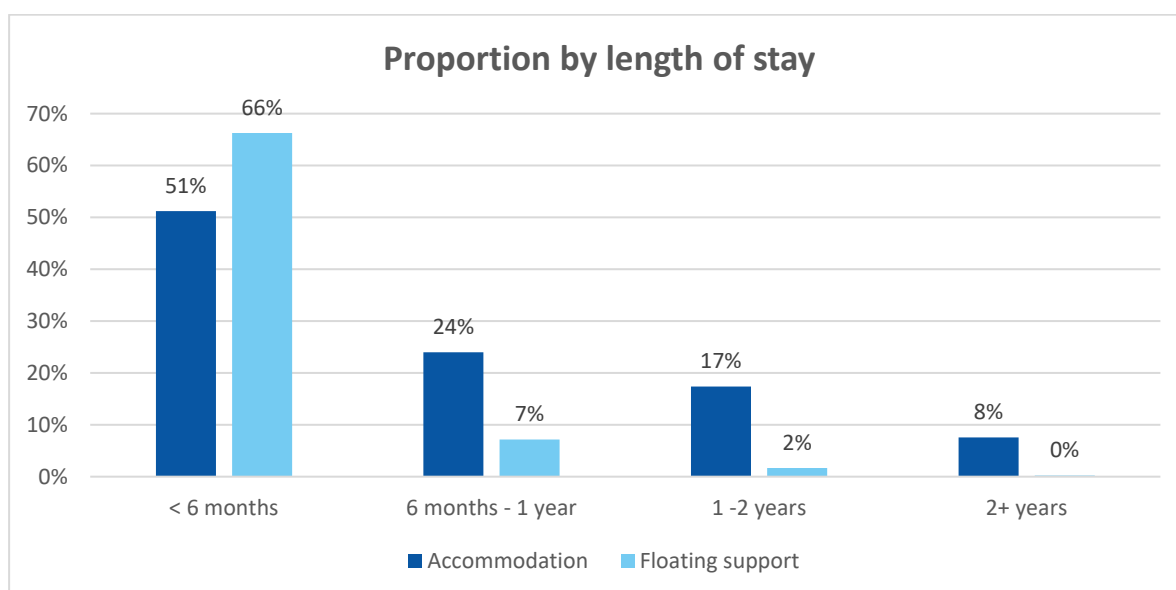


- 7.54 Clients with **two "High" or "Very High" needs** made up 24%, 26%, and 22% of floating support assessments across the years, while those with **three or more "High" or "Very High" needs** accounted for 23%, 21%, and 24%. These groups consistently represent around a quarter of the floating support cohort.

## Length of stay in services



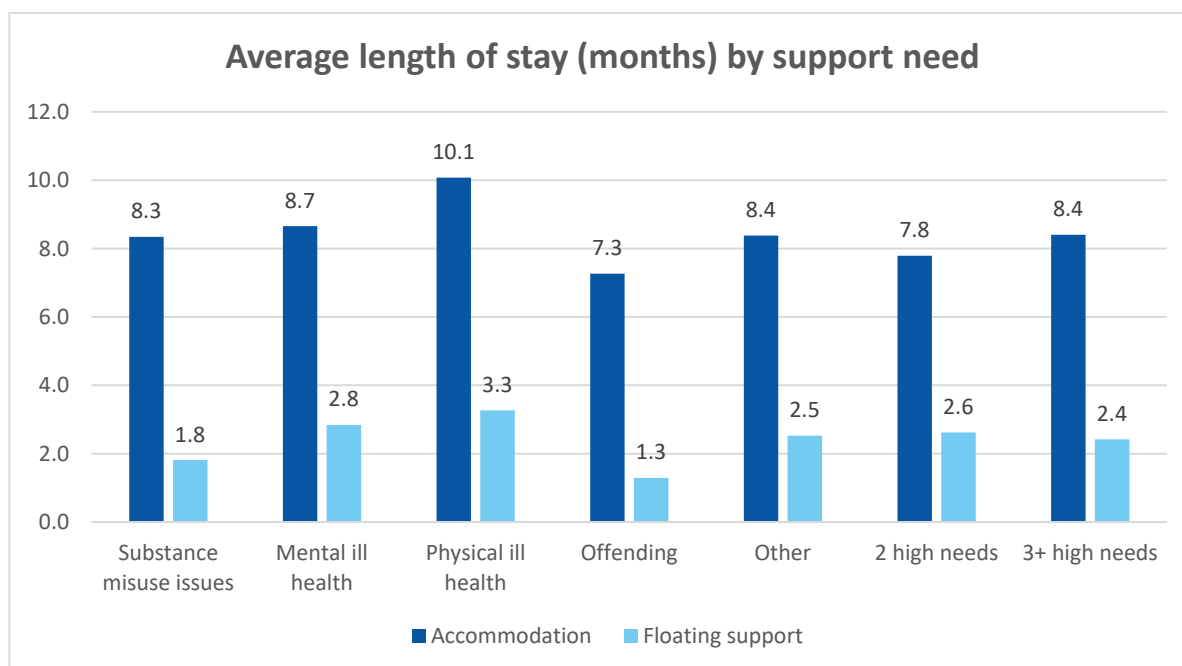
- 7.55 The average length of stay in accommodation across all three years is significantly higher than the length of time clients use floating support services. This is a reflection of the nature and purpose of floating support services, which are often intended to be interim community-based approaches that enable clients with support needs to begin living independently when moving on from supported accommodation rather than a long-term solution.
- 7.56 For clients leaving support services, the average length of stay in accommodation remained steady across the three years, at 7.8 months in 2021/22 and 7.7 in 2023/22. On the other hand, the average length of stay in floating support decreased over the years, from 3.2 months in 2021/22 to 1.8 months in 2023/24.



- 7.57 The majority of clients stay in accommodation (51%) and floating support services (66%) for 6 months or less, indicating that short-term stays are more common across both accommodation and floating support services. A smaller proportion across each service, 24%

and 7% respectively, stay for 6 months to 1 year, while only 17% and 2% stay for 1-2 years. 8% of those living in supported accommodation remain for over 2 years.

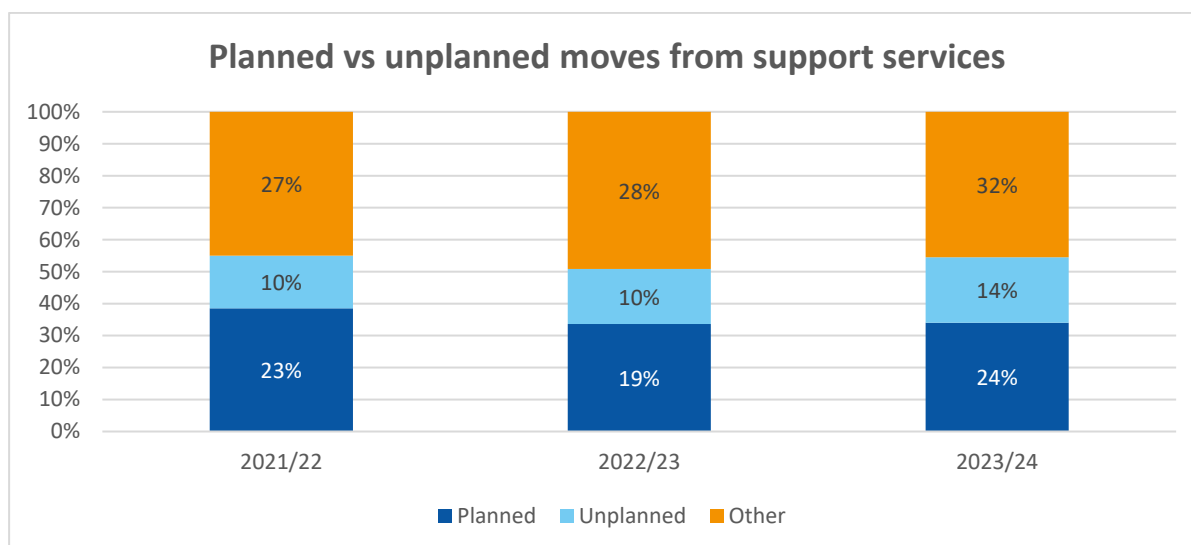
- 7.58 This highlights that most clients experience relatively brief stays, but a small number require longer-term accommodation and support, possibly reflecting more complex needs or challenges in transitioning to permanent housing or recording of Housing First tenancies.



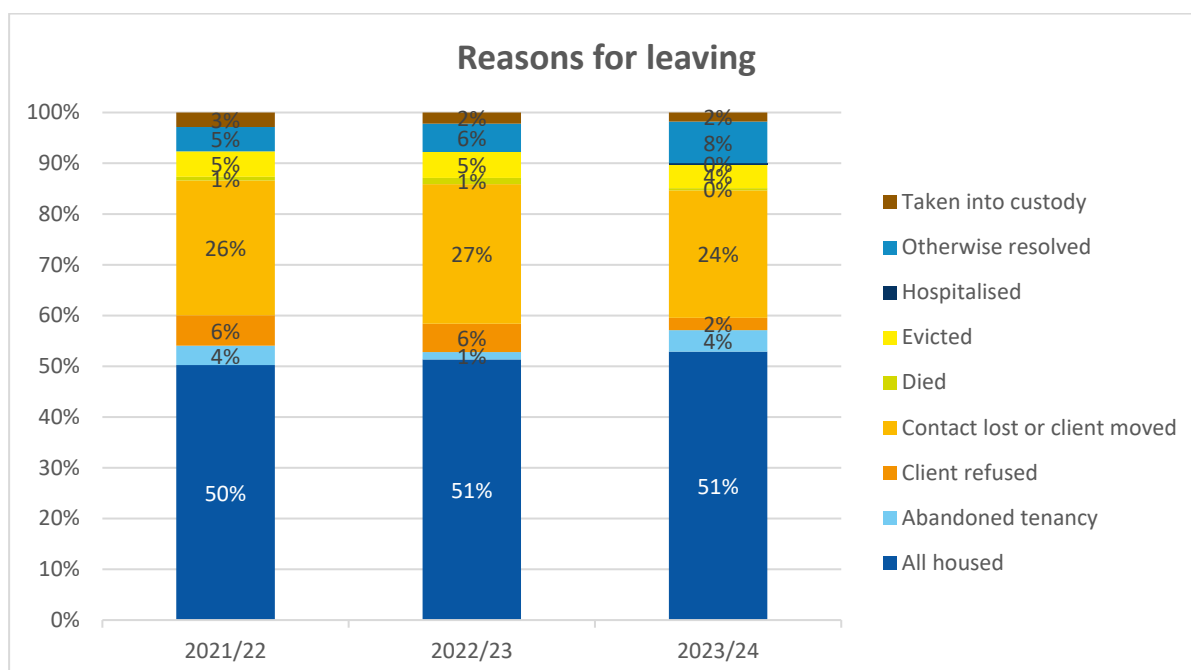
- 7.59 The average length of stay varies based on support needs. Across both floating support and accommodation services, clients experiencing physical ill health stay for the longest duration at 10.1 months for accommodation services and 3.3 for floating support.
- 7.60 Offending-related clients have the shortest stays across both service types at 7.3 months for accommodation and 1.3 for floating support services, suggesting that their accommodation needs may be more short-term or that other factors influence their stay duration.

## Outcomes

- 7.61 The number of clients leaving services has gradually increased over the three years, from 421 in 2021/22 to 414 in 2022/23, and then rising to 471 in 2023/24. This upward trend suggests a slight growth in client turnover.



- 7.62 The breakdown of client departures shows that planned moves have slightly increased from 23% in 2021/22 to 24% in 2023/24. Unplanned leaves have increased from 10% to 14% in 2023/24.<sup>31</sup>
- 7.63 Other reasons<sup>32</sup> for leaving have also risen from 27% to 32%.
- 7.64 The increase in planned and unplanned leaves, particularly the rise in unplanned exits, suggests that while some clients are leaving as expected, there is a notable proportion whose departure may be due to unforeseen circumstances, potentially indicating challenges in maintaining stability for these clients.



<sup>31</sup> Values do not sum to 100% due to gaps in data recording around exits

<sup>32</sup> **Other** reasons for leaving include: whereabouts unknown, deceased, or Crash Pad (St Helen's only)

- 7.65 The most common reason for clients leaving accommodation is due to them having found long-term accommodation<sup>33</sup> accounting for 50-51% of exits. This suggests that a significant portion of those receiving support successfully transition to longer term living situations. This outcome is a positive indicator of the services' effectiveness in helping clients secure permanent accommodation,
- 7.66 "Contact lost or client moved" makes up the second largest reason for service exits, at 24-27% of cases, indicating a challenge in maintaining engagement or stable housing.
- 7.67 Other significant reasons include "Abandoned tenancy" (4%) and "Evictions" (4-5%).
- 7.68 Smaller proportions are attributed to "Client refused" (2%) and "Otherwise resolved" (5-8%), with minor increases in cases resolved outside the system.
- 7.69 Deaths, hospitalizations, and custody-related exits represent the smallest proportions, reflecting minimal impact on overall.

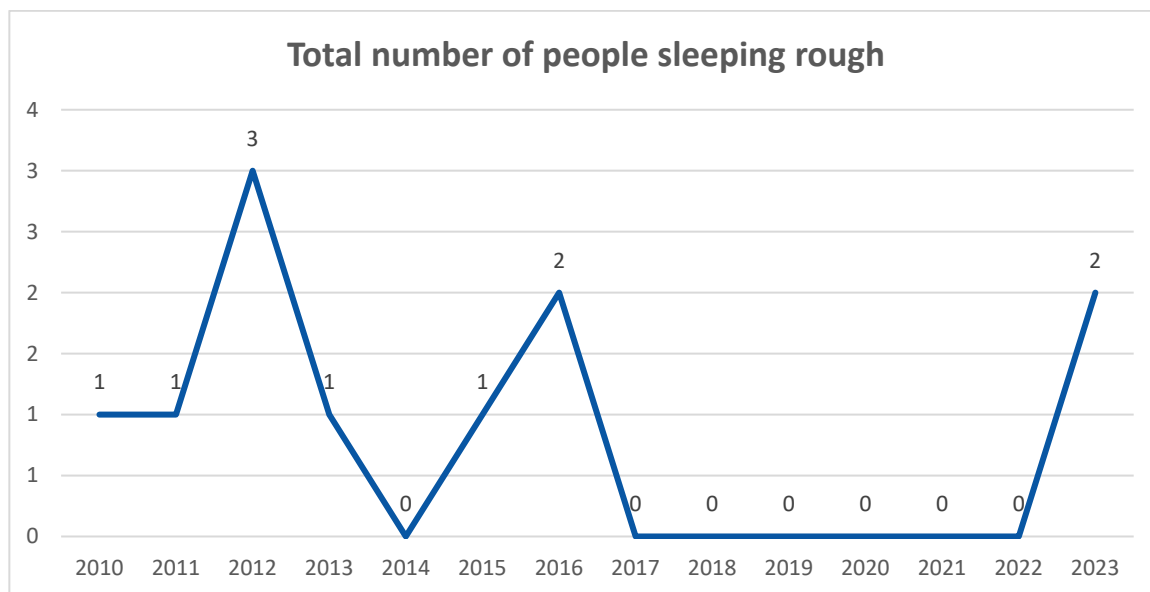
## 8. Rough Sleeping

- 8.1 The annual Rough Sleeping Snapshot and Data-Led Frameworks, developed by the-then UK government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), are essential tools for understanding and tackling homelessness. They provide valuable insights into rough sleeping trends, helping to guide policy and resource allocation.
- 8.2 The Rough Sleeping Snapshot offers a point-in-time estimate taken each autumn, using methods such as street counts and evidence-based estimates. This provides a standardized view of rough sleeping for a specific night, allowing for national comparisons.
- 8.3 The Data-Led Framework offers a more dynamic, ongoing record of rough sleeping, capturing monthly trends. It presents figures 'over the course of the month', which detail the total number of rough sleeping instances recorded during the entire month. This contrasts with the annual Rough Sleeping Snapshot, which is a one-time, point-in-time count taken on a single night each autumn.

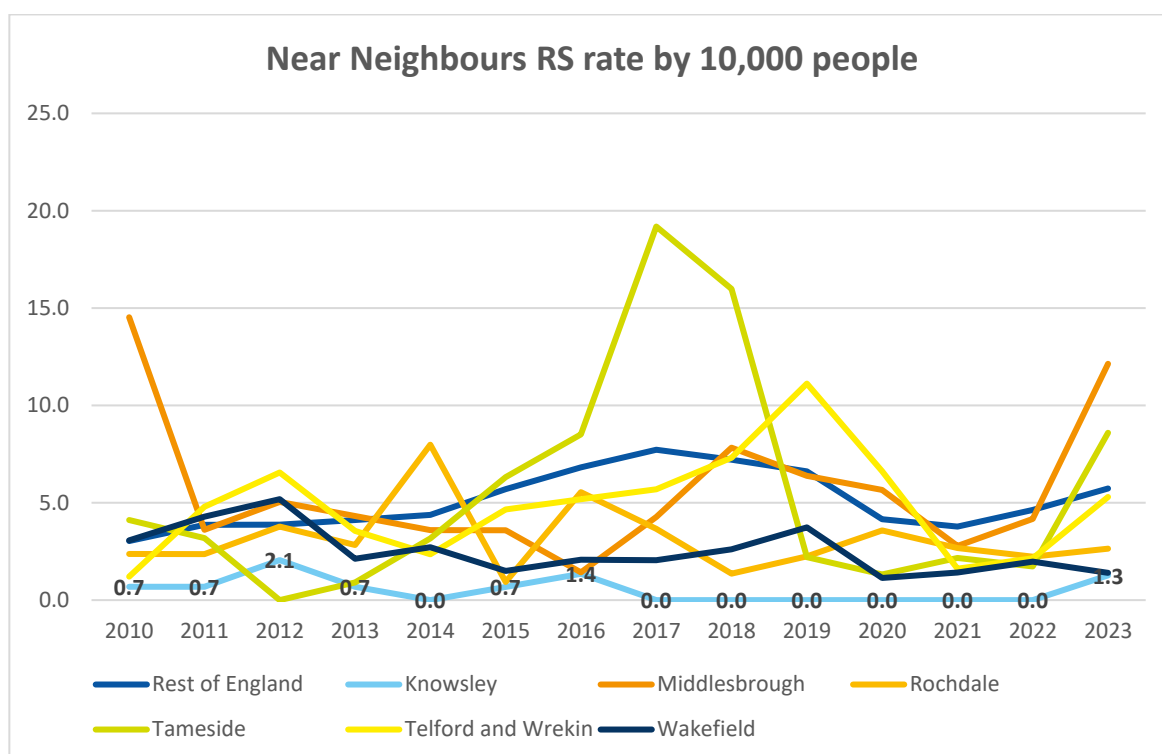
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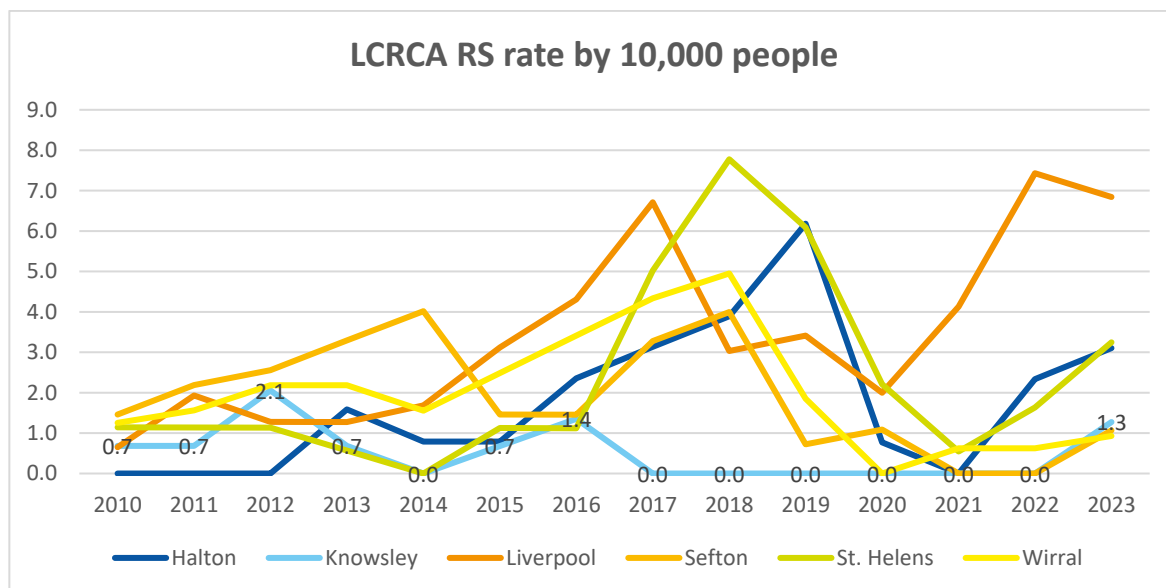
<sup>33</sup> Long term accommodation includes: Housed via Housing First, Renting privately owned accommodation, RSL Tenancy, Returned to previous home, To independent housing, Rehoused RSL, To sheltered housing, Moved into a care home, To long-term supported housing, Moved into Long Term Harm Reduction Service, Moved into shared accommodation

## Rough Sleeping Annual Snapshot



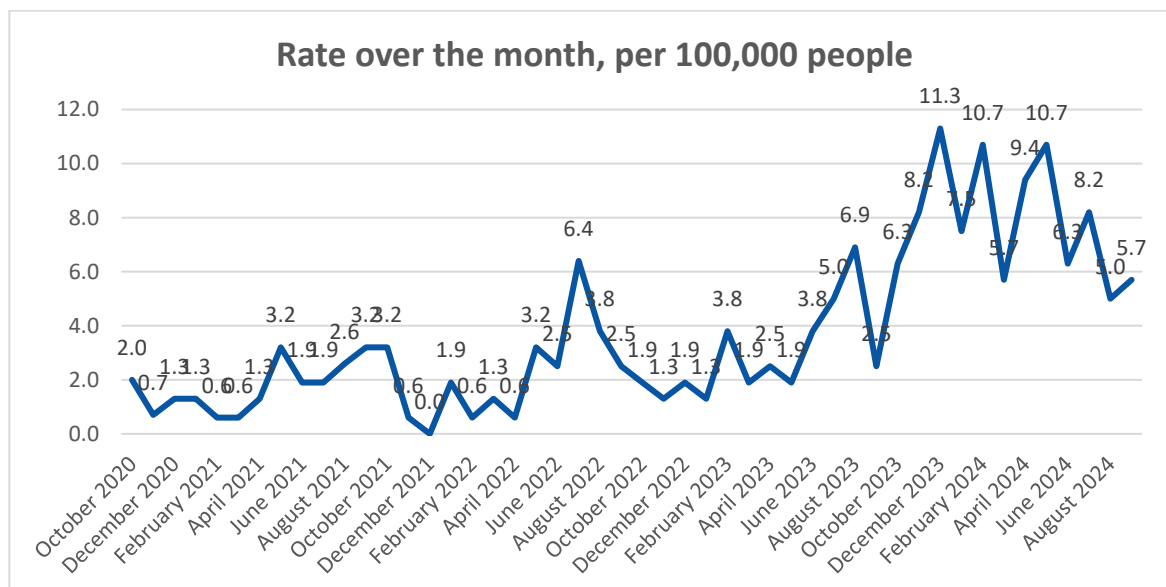
- 8.4 From 2010 to 2023, Knowsley has maintained low but fluctuating numbers of rough sleepers, typically between 0 and 3 each year. A peak was observed in 2012 with 3 rough sleepers, and in 2023, the figure rose to 2. The period from 2016 to 2021 saw zero rough sleepers, suggesting effective local interventions or possible underreporting of rough sleeping.





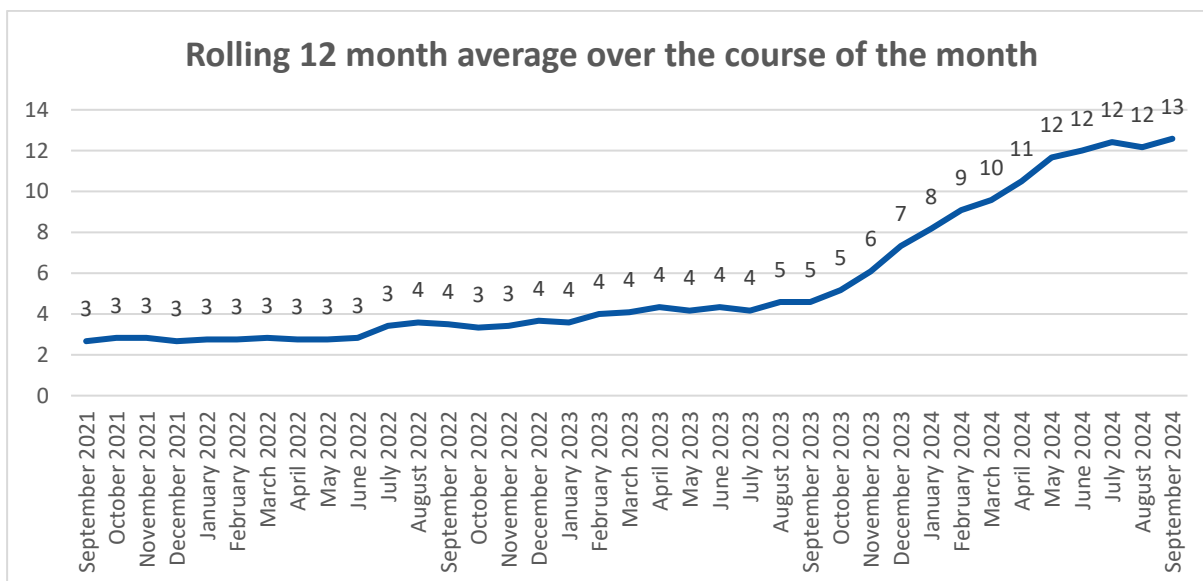
- 8.5 Knowsley's rates of rough sleeping per 10,000 people are significantly lower than that of its statistical and geographical neighbours, it is not clear whether this is a recording issue or that Knowsley did in fact have zero rough sleeping per 10,000 of the population over these years.

### Data-Led Framework: Rough Sleepers throughout the Month

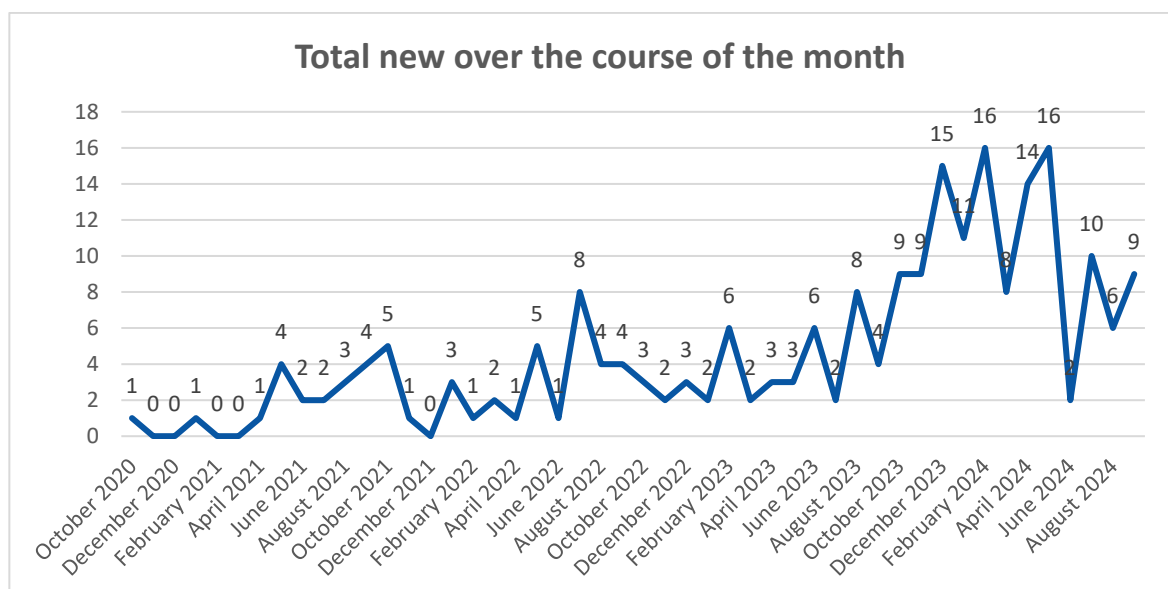


- 8.6 The data-led framework, which tracks rough sleeping on an aggregate monthly basis, shows an increase in rough sleeping rates from 2.0 in October 2020 to 5.7 in August 2024. This peaked at 11.3 in December 2023 and remained high in early 2024, highlighting a rise in rough sleeping during these months that is otherwise concealed by the snapshot data.

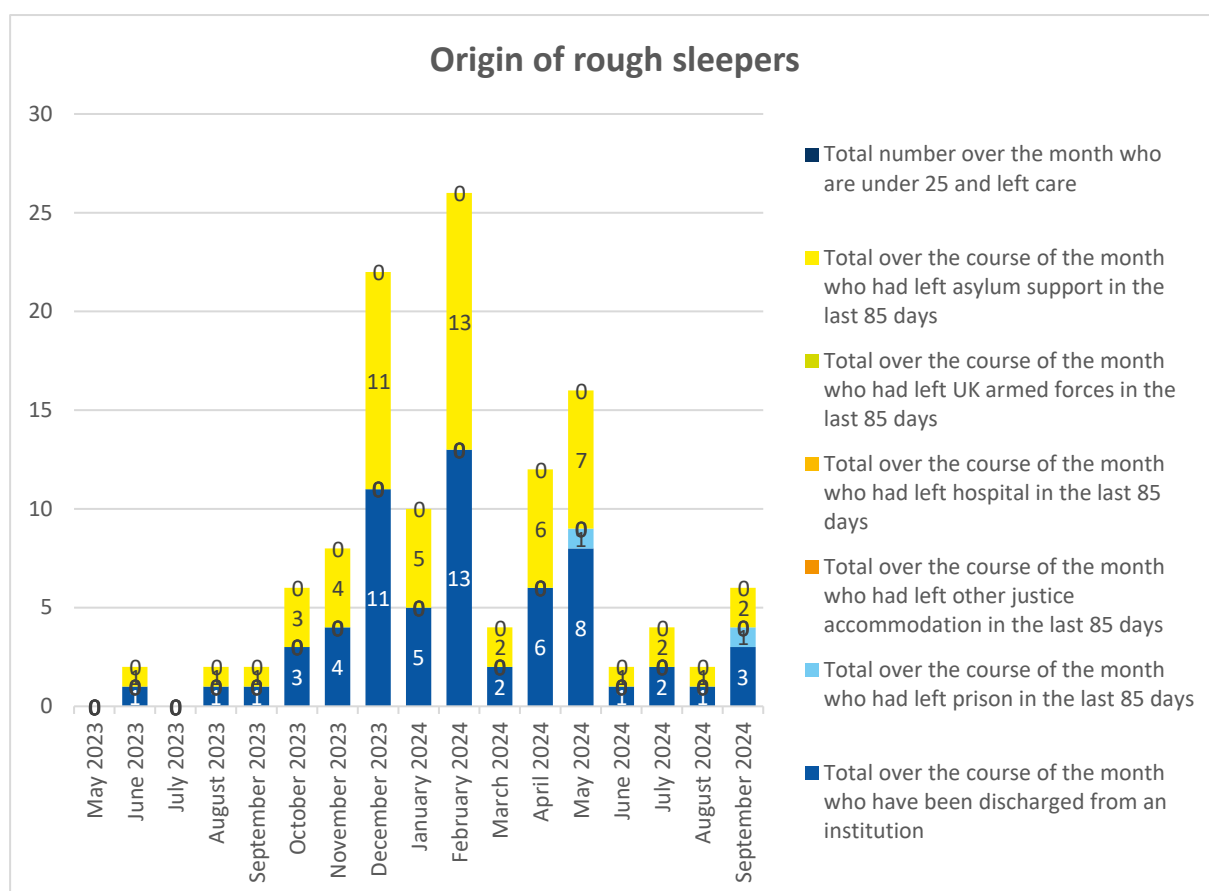




- 8.7 The figures on the number of rough sleepers over the course of a month can be used to calculate a rolling 12-month average. As at October 2024, the 12-month rolling average number of rough sleepers in Knowsley had reached 13, rising from 5 at the same time the previous year.



- 8.8 The data-led framework also tracks the number of new rough sleepers, which increased from 1 in October 2020 to 9 in August 2024. Again, the months of February and April 2024 saw the highest numbers, with 16 new rough sleepers over the course of each month. This suggests that an influx of individuals entering rough sleeping for the first time is contributing to the rising rates.



- 8.9 The number of rough sleepers leaving asylum support accommodation and institutions has also increased. Reporting on asylum leavers started in May 2023, with 0 recorded that month. By September 2024, this number had risen to 2, with significant peaks in December 2023 (11) and February 2024 (13). Similarly, those discharged from institutions increased from 0 in May 2023 to 3 in September 2024, also peaking at 11 in December 2023 and 13 in February 2024.
- 8.10 Both groups—those leaving asylum support and those discharged from institutions—are key contributors to rough sleeping. The significant peaks in late 2023 and early 2024 suggest challenges in the transition from these settings into stable housing, contributing to the rise in rough sleeping.

## 9. Hidden Homeless

- 9.1 Crisis' Homelessness Monitor estimates a ratio between the numbers rough sleeping and the numbers sofa surfing. In 2023 this ratio was 10:1. Taking a rolling annual average of the estimated numbers of rough sleepers each month between September May 2023 to September 2024, (which we estimate to be around 8 individuals) it is possible that there are around 80 people who are sofa surfing at any one time in Knowsley. This would be an underestimate as it can also be assumed that a proportion of those who approach the council and who have been asked to leave by family/friends, a proportion of those on the waiting list

who are overcrowded are also hidden homeless, and a proportion of those who are assessed and recorded on Mainstay as falling into priority 5-7 are potentially at risk of homelessness.

## 10. Domestic Abuse

- 10.1 H-CLIC data shows that over the 3-year period between 2021/22 and 2023/24 2-4% of those in priority need and owed a main duty experienced domestic abuse. They also represented a slightly reducing percentage of those owed a prevention duty, dropping from 8% in 2021/22 to 7% in 2023/24, and a similar pattern for those owed a relief duty falling from 18% in 2021/22 to 15% in 2023/24. When looking at the support needs of homeless duty cases, domestic abuse as a support need has been consistently identified in 17% of cases over the previous 3 years. The Housing Options team includes a specialist DA officer who is able to advise on assessments as well as be involved in first step Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). The Council's MARAC meetings are well attended with Police, schools, nurses, and CLG attending, and genuine multi-agency work taking place. MATAC (Multi-Agency Tasking and Co-ordination) meetings have been introduced by Police and are focussed on working with perpetrators to prevent future incidents.
- 10.2 When looking at data captured on MainStay, among those fleeing domestic abuse, it is important to note that the Refuge is not included in the data gathering. Of those recorded on Mainstay with a DA issue the proportion of repeat presentations decreased over time: 37% in 2021/22, 32% in 2022/23, and 29% in 2023/24. At the same time, new presentations remained significant, accounting for 46% in 2021/22, increasing to 54% in 2022/23, and slightly decreasing to 48% in 2023/24. There has also been an increase from 74% to 90% of those who are from Knowsley with a DA related need recorded on MainStay.
- 10.3 Stakeholders have said that they believe there is a lot of hidden domestic abuse and homelessness issues with people choosing to live with family or friends or remain in their abusive household rather present as homeless, until there is a crisis. Knowsley has introduced a policy of supporting perpetrators to access housing in recognition of the risk of repeat cases where a perpetrator is made homeless as a result of their abusive behaviour. This policy could be a contributing factor in the reduction of homelessness presentation from those experiencing domestic abuse.
- 10.4 The Council and Social landlords provide 'target hardening' to improve the security of properties and Sanctuary support to enable more families to stay in their existing homes where it can be made possible to do so. There is close working with Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership to ensure that organisational policies support the needs of domestic abuse survivors, their children and where needed perpetrators and that staff across the council feel confident working with these issues. In addition to the Council funded target hardening and Housing Solutions DA specialist worker, the council provides financial resources to fund Knowsley Women and Children's Refuge, domestic abuse sanctuary support, therapeutic interventions, dispersed accommodation and supports children experiencing domestic abuse.
- 10.5 A key area for development relates to 'target hardening'/Sanctuary support to enable families to stay in their existing homes. The current budget for this support is £35k (p.a.) - made up of a £5k contribution from Housing and £30k from Safer Communities. Stakeholders would like

to see an increase to this £35k budget to support more families experiencing domestic abuse that want to remain in their existing home in Knowsley to do so.

- 10.6 There are gaps in provision for women with complex needs. Stakeholders told us that DA is increasing, and the complexity of needs is also increasing, with many clients having mental health and/or drug issues. Data from MainStay indicates a growth in the number of people with two needs increasing from 18% in 2021/22 to 26% in 2023/24, while those with substance misuse and mental health issues and domestic abuse rising from 51% in 2021/23, and after a drop to 32% in 2022/23 rising again to 55% in 2023/24. Stakeholders also suggested that a more sensitive approach was needed to allocations so that victim/survivors were not housed in unsafe areas. In addition to these gaps stakeholder suggested that social landlords needed to work more closely and effectively with Knowsley's DA partnership to ensure that when their tenants experienced domestic abuse their staff and policies were able to adequately support the needs of victim/survivors, their children and where needed perpetrators.
- 10.7 The Domestic Abuse Strategy is due for refresh in 2025, and Safe Accommodation recommendations should be aligned to the new homelessness strategy.

## **11. Young people and Care Experienced Young People**

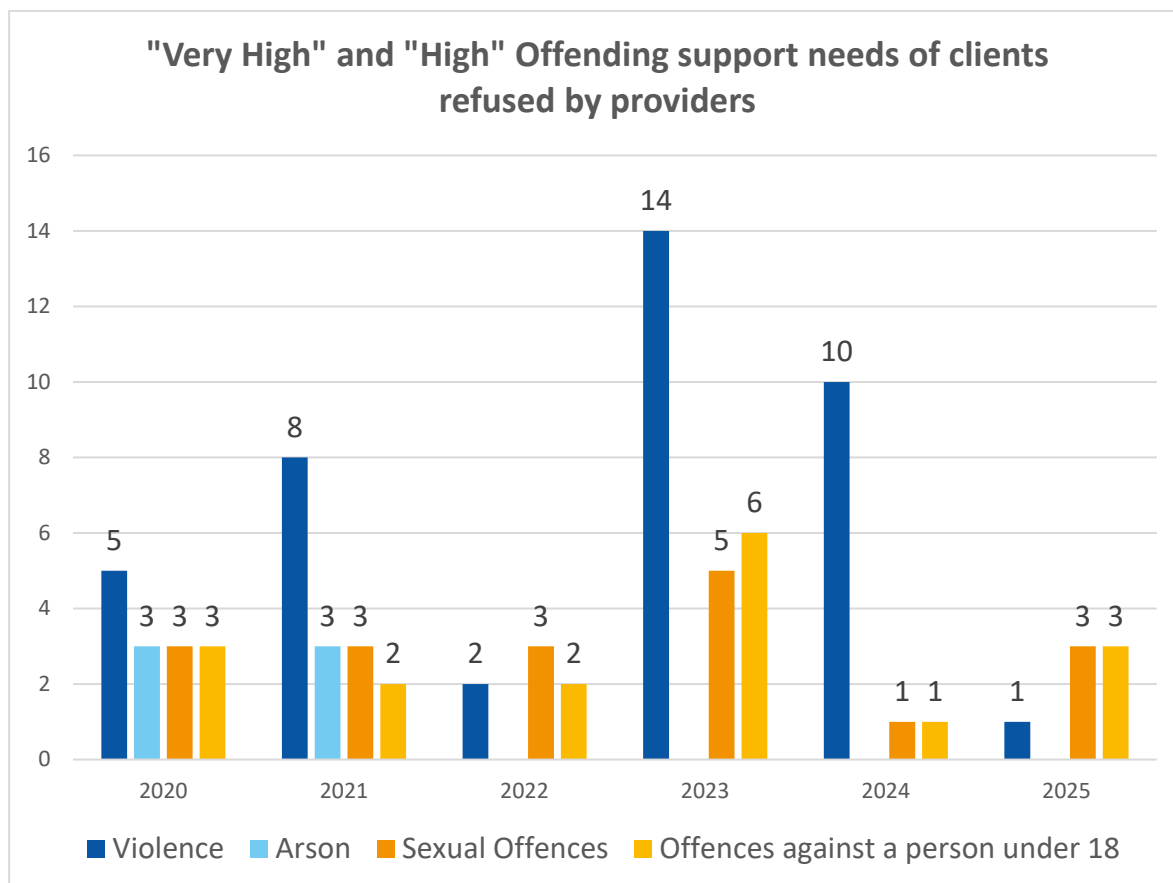
- 11.1 The Knowsley Housing Solutions teams and Children's service have a Protocol in place for young people/care experienced persons and as the two teams are co-located joint working is effective. The Cared for Children's Service is currently mapping out its service with the intention of preparing a market position statement.
- 11.2 There are a number of children's homes in Knowsley and the trend for providers to purchase housing in Knowsley to use as children's homes is growing. There are a high number of children and young people placed from Liverpool and other parts of the country. Knowsley itself has very few children and young people placed in these services. For example, there are currently 47 units in children's homes in Knowsley with the Council only using 7 of these. The Council is however placing 25 children and young people outside of Knowsley as the provision they require is not available in borough.
- 11.3 There is also commissioned supported housing consisting of 40 self-contained flats, access to a floating support service provided by For Housing that works with people aged 16+, 17 supported lodging places and 3 'crash' beds available. Stakeholders stated that the outcomes for young people placed in supported lodging were often more positive than other provision, however the support and access to psychologist provided at the self-contained flats were well thought of by young people interviewed as part of this review.
- 11.4 The location and buildings for the young people's provision are considered old, isolated and no longer fit for purpose and there is a need to review the current provision with a view to creating a more robust wraparound accommodation and support service that prepares young people for employment and to manage a tenancy. Skills and attainment of young people in Knowsley are below the national average, and Knowsley has higher levels of persistent absence in schools and fewer children achieving English and Maths GCSEs than national and regional levels. The 16–25-year-old age segment presents as the largest cohort for either

prevention or relief duties within Knowsley's homelessness figures. MainStay data also records a steady increase in assessments for accommodation from 154 in 2021/22 to 195 in 2022/23, and 211 completed assessments in 2023/24, a 27% increase. The provision of Foyer type accommodation and employment support would provide an improved offer to young people in Knowsley as well as help to address the attainment levels, and the tenancy retainment rates for young people.

- 11.5 Stakeholders felt that while there was good joint working and pathways for young people there was often a cliff-edge once they reached the age of 25, there is a need to work in a much more preventative way and to engage with young people at risk of homelessness much earlier than the Council and its partners are able to currently.
- 11.6 There is also a recognition that as part of young people's transition planning Children's Services needs to prepare young people for independence and the changes in service offer and eligibility for support once they are no longer the responsibility of Children's Services.
- 11.7 For those care experienced persons who are housed via Property Pool Plus (where they are prioritised for housing) stakeholders commented on the number of tenancy failures and suggested that there is a need for more stepping stone, or training flats to help prepare young people for living independently, as well as floating support to ensure that the transition to managing the tenancy as an adult is positive. This would include advice on work and welfare benefits and the impact of part-time or intermittent working.
- 11.8 The Government's proposed removal of local connection criteria for care experienced persons require Knowsley to adapt its triage and assessment processes and the Protocol to accommodate these changes and ensure care experienced young people are housed irrespective of originating location.

## 12. Offenders

- 12.1 Offenders make up 84% of Duty to Refer cases, having grown from 36% in 2021/22, referrals from prison have declined over the previous three years from 4%, to 7% and falling back to 2% in 2023/24. Partnership work between the Probation Service and Housing Solutions and the CAS3 homelessness prevention officer is good with regular weekly meetings to review all up-and-coming releases from prison that are of no fixed abode and agree actions, including making referrals and booking appointments for assessments. While Duty to Refer works well generally, there are specific issues with sex offenders who are very difficult to house and those with histories of violence.
- 12.2 An analysis of MainStay data shows that Violence is the most prevalent reason for refusal, with 40 recorded cases over the five-year period. The numbers peaked in 2023 (14 cases) and 2024 (10 cases), Sexual offences (18 cases) and arson (6 cases) present even greater challenges, as these offences are particularly difficult to accommodate.



- 12.3 Stakeholders also felt that Knowsley did not have enough 'Sit Up' or emergency provision to support unplanned no fixed abode releases. CAS3 accommodation is generally used for those who are not able to be referred by the Duty to Refer route, with a maximum of 12 weeks stay. CAS3 also provides a good opportunity to assess people and determine whether they are safe to go to a family home, can live independently or need supported housing. The biggest challenge however is lack of long-term accommodation. Knowsley also has AfEO funding for a specialist Offender worker within Housing Solutions, this officer works with people referred from prison. To support offenders into the private rented sector AfEO tenancies the Council will top up the rent beyond the LHA rate for up to 12 months. Ex-offenders can remain on Property Pool Plus and bid. The Council will also enhance the standard rent deposit offer where people are motivated to sustain a tenancy and reduce offending.
- 12.4 Stakeholders felt that a number of dispersed one-bedroom flats with intensive tenancy support, particularly in their early part of a new tenancy would be really helpful in reducing tenancy breakdowns.
- 12.5 Housing is needed to give people the stability needed to address re-offending. Stakeholders would like to see a seamless service with access to hostel/emergency accommodation as a stop gap while longer term housing is found. There is not usually accommodation ready and waiting for people on release so there is a need to have some emergency provision; this also provides an opportunity to assess individuals and what their next steps should be. The main challenge was seen to be the availability of suitable private rented and social housing, and a lack of shared accommodation which could provide a solution to ex-offenders who are under 35.

- 12.6 Offenders and staff within the Probation Service need good quality advice and guidance on housing options and housing rights.
- 12.7 It was suggested that there will be a big impact on homelessness and housing and support needs from the possible changes to sentencing policy. It is anticipated that the review will look to reduce the number of shorter sentences and to avoid prison so it is felt that there will need to be more housing and/or support provision in the community for the increasing number of people who will be on community orders, as alternatives to prison. It is anticipated therefore that there will be an increased demand for housing, and related support services to ensure not just tenancy sustainment but compliance with the community orders. The new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will need to consider the impact of these changes in future commissioning of housing and support alongside colleagues in the Probation Service.

### **13. Mental health**

- 13.1 Mental health support needs appear consistently to be the most prevalent support need identified in HCLIC data and MainStay data. It would appear that access to the existing mental health supported accommodation is difficult unless a person has a diagnosis of 'severe and enduring' mental ill-health. The outreach team includes a Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) a post funded via the Liverpool City Region to work with the team 4 days a week. It would also appear that the partnership work with mental health services varies with some stakeholders reporting good joint work with Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, while others report difficulties in accessing mental health services.
- 13.2 Alt Bank has psychologist input to support staff and their work with clients and a significant training programme on working in a Psychologically Informed way has been implemented at Alt Bank. Stakeholders felt this could be extended across all providers working with the homeless and rough sleepers.
- 13.3 Stakeholders expressed concern at the approach of Registered Providers who they felt were increasingly risk averse in terms of housing people with mental health issues. This was particularly referenced in relation to all age extra care provision being developed in Knowsley where RP partners were unclear about the level of complexity the schemes are designed for. The whole Life Commissioning Team have been actively advocating for mental health needs and support to be met in these schemes. Stakeholders also felt that the mental health pathway needs to be improved with flow from hospital discharge to appropriate housing and support requiring improvement. Stakeholders also identified good joint working through MARAM (multi-agency risk management) meetings and a high-risk panel to look at the most complex cases and to develop risk sharing approaches.
- 13.4 Stakeholders identified a cohort of people who self-neglect, hoard, and/or whose mental health impedes their ability to manage a tenancy or leads to anti-social behaviour and often leads to tenancy loss and difficulties in being rehoused due to previous issues or rent arrears. Mental health services provided by Mersey Care are under severe pressure and unable to meet demand. Stakeholders felt that landlords needed to be more proactive in referring their tenants for support earlier and a view that often people were referred at crisis point, or after



eviction when better/earlier notification and joint working could have prevented the loss of home.

- 13.5 There is significant unmet need for preventative support, there is also however a need for more trauma informed approaches to be developed by and with landlords.

## **14. Substance misuse**

- 14.1 Knowsley's Drugs Strategy has four aims:

1. Expanding capacity and improving quality of Knowsley's treatment services.
2. Expanding and improving the support for children and young people in Knowsley: early identification and support for at-risk young people
3. Reducing drug related harms and deaths
4. Expansion of prevention-based approaches, screening, and outreach activities.

- 14.2 The Joint Combatting Drugs Unit Knowsley report (October 2024) highlighted unmet need and prevalence rates which indicates that for opiate and crack use, opiate only and crack only use Knowsley has a per 1,000 population rates lower than the Northwest but higher than England. The alcohol prevalence however was, 20.4 per 1,000 of the population, much higher than the 17.5 for the Northwest and 13.8 per 1,000 prevalence for England.

- 14.3 An assessment of unmet need for the previous 12 months shows that unmet need for alcohol treatment and crack only treatment is decreasing while for opiates, and opiates and crack use the unmet need is increasing. Alcohol deaths have remained largely static since April 2022 but drug misuse deaths have fallen and the population in treatment has grown from 20% to 23% and the numbers accessing residential rehabilitation has also increase from 16 to 21 over this period, and the number of prison leavers who are picked up for continuing care within 3 weeks has increased from 31% to 83% over the period.

- 14.4 The partnership has also implemented a Housing Provider pathway with an in-reach worker and dual diagnosis nurses, recruited to support housing providers with substance misuse issues, particularly at Alt Bank. A new Role of Housing and Partnerships Manager is being recruited to with the aim of focussing on training and upskilling housing staff to enable them to provide brief interventions, on supporting housing pathways for people leaving rehab and in recovery, and to focus on identifying needs earlier and routing people into treatment pathways. There is work on the development of a new treatment and recovery centre in Kirkby. The partnership has also developed a co-occurring mental health and substance misuse agreement, multi-disciplinary team working group looking to increase training, knowledge and referral routes as well as joint case management.

## **15. Gypsy and Traveller**

- 15.1 There are no Gypsy and Traveller households living on pitches or yards in the borough. The January 2020 caravan count confirms no pitches or yards. The 2013 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment carried out by arc4 identified no pitch or yard needs although some transit provision was recommended.



## 16. Veterans

- 16.1 Knowsley Council is a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant which seeks to provide support in a range of areas including housing to in-service and ex-service personnel. There are an estimated 8,668 veterans living in Knowsley, with 665 receiving war pensions (being aged over 65).
- 16.2 The 2020 household survey identified:
- 780 households where someone is currently servicing in HM Forces.
  - 1,194 households where someone has served in HM Forces in the past 5 years.
  - 90 households where there are current/ex-armed forces personnel who have injuries that require adapted accommodation.
  - A small need for temporary supported accommodation when household members leave HM Forces (32); and
  - 213 households where there is bereaved spouse/civil partner of armed forces personnel who require housing (and half stated a need for housing association accommodation).
- 16.3 The guidance from MHCLG *Improving access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces* was updated in December 2024 to ensure that veterans and their partners/ex-partners or family members are not excluded by reasons of local connection or arrears, or welfare/medical issues. Local authorities are also encouraged to actively find out as part of their assessment processes whether someone is or has been in the armed forces or is or has been a partner or family member of someone who is or has been in the armed forces. Knowsley will need to adapt its triage and assessment processes to accommodate these changes.

## 17. Views of People with Lived Experience of Homelessness

- 17.1 Seventeen people with lived experience of homelessness were consulted through on-site visits to Alt Bank hostel for single homeless people, Octavia Court, commissioned supported housing service for young people, and Yates Court homeless families' scheme.
- 17.2 Main issues arising from the conversations were that for people at Alt Bank it was difficult to access Housing Options unless they had support from an agency or other statutory service. However, people thought the support received once 'in the system' was good. People also appreciated that they didn't have to wait long to access Alt Bank, although some had had stays in hotels prior to coming to the scheme. There would appear to be some issues with the pathway from prison discharge, with some people talking about a lack of pre-release planning. People were positive about the service at Alt Bank and the additional input from Community Psychiatric services and the CGL substance misuse service. Awareness of the council's homelessness service, and other help available it was felt could be improved and some people acknowledged they would need on-going support once they moved.
- 17.3 The young people interviewed at Octavia Court had either come from a family home following a relationship breakdown or had had several temporary accommodations stays before coming

to the project, one person had stayed at the crash pad and felt that they would have wanted choice about the placement. Those who had had interaction with the outreach team and SHAP were positive about the support they got. The five residents interviewed were positive about the staff support at the service and also the semi-independent flats in terms of helping them prepare for living independently. The slow pace of move on was commented on. The young people at Octavia Court felt that in addition to just generally improving the supply of housing, there could be more advice and information available on issues such as the impact of temporary or part-time working on benefits, more targeted information on homelessness services to at risk demographics such as young people, and people wanted clearer information on Property Pool Plus.

- 17.4 Yates Court is the only commissioned scheme for homeless families in Knowsley and people interviewed commented on the length of time they waited to move into Yates Court, as well as the number of other TA placements they experienced which for some people disrupted children's education. People also felt that Council services were not well publicised, and the website information was considered poor and difficult to navigate to the right page for an on-line application. People also felt that a lot of information was requested at this early stage. People felt there should more information available more widely, outside the council on homelessness.
- 17.5 People commented on problems with affordability in the private rented sector and people interviewed felt that that need for a guarantor was often an additional barrier to accessing the PRS even where the Council provided a rent deposit. There were issues with previous and current rent arrears which were a barrier to bidding on Property Pool Plus. Although it was also the case that some people did not prioritise payment of rent or service charges either in previous failed tenancies or at Yates Court and were now being taken through court proceedings for arrears.
- 17.6 Although people had lived independently in previous tenancies, and felt they had few support needs, there was concern about buying new furniture for a new tenancy and people felt mental health services were also difficult to access. It would however appear people need more robust financial management and budgeting skills training, to avoid falling into arrears and becoming homeless in future.
- 17.7 Improvements suggested were to review and clarify council information to the website, ensure that there is good housing support in prisons, clarify Property Pool Plus bidding information, and consider relaxing local connection requirements for hard to let property.
- 17.8 There appeared to be low engagement with VCSE services, both before and after people became homeless
- 17.9 Young people and those with support from social workers or other professionals generally had a more positive experience of accessing support from the Council to resolve their homelessness than single adults/those without this support
- 17.10 Discussions indicated high demand for existing supported accommodation in Knowsley. Several people raised they would have liked more choice of accommodation placement.

Several people living at Yates Court indicated they had waited a significant length of time to access the project; this could include several temporary accommodation placements.

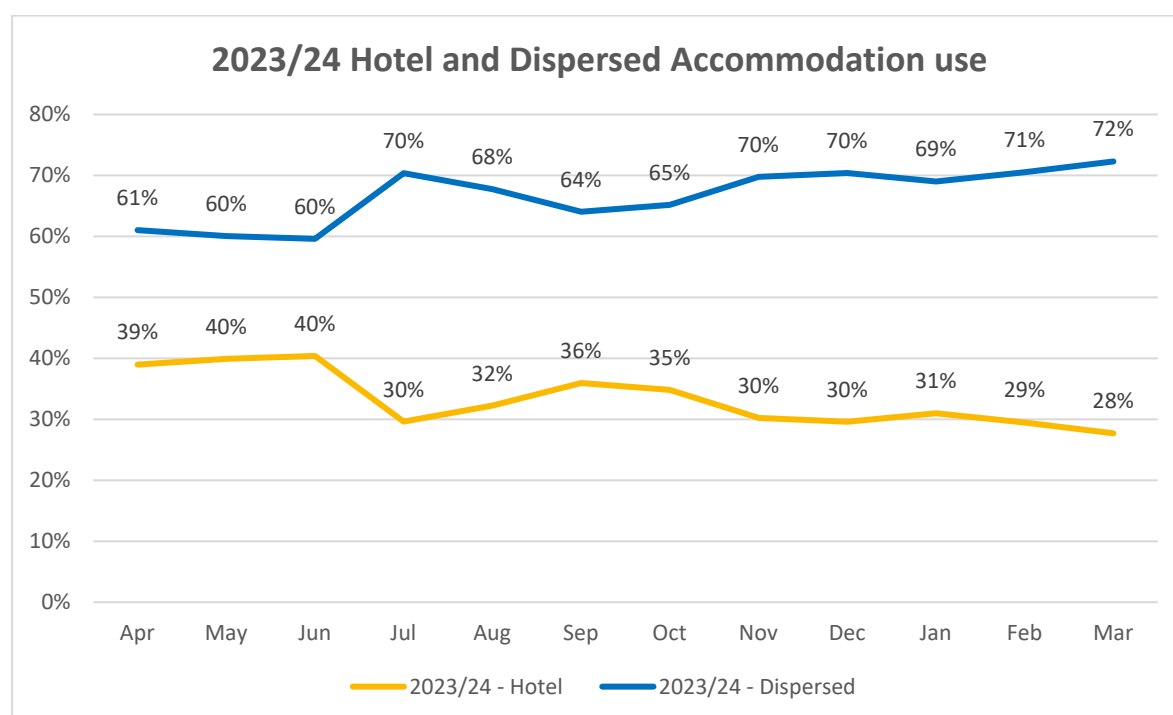
- 17.11 In terms of move-on/throughput in services: almost all participants wished to live independently and considered they had the skills to do this – although some were concerned about managing tenancies on a very low income. Discussions highlighted most people wanted to remain close to family/friends and other networks, but that supply of suitable properties in these areas may not match this demand. Throughput within supported accommodation projects is also impacted by some residents' large rent and/or service charge arrears, relating to current and/or former tenancies.

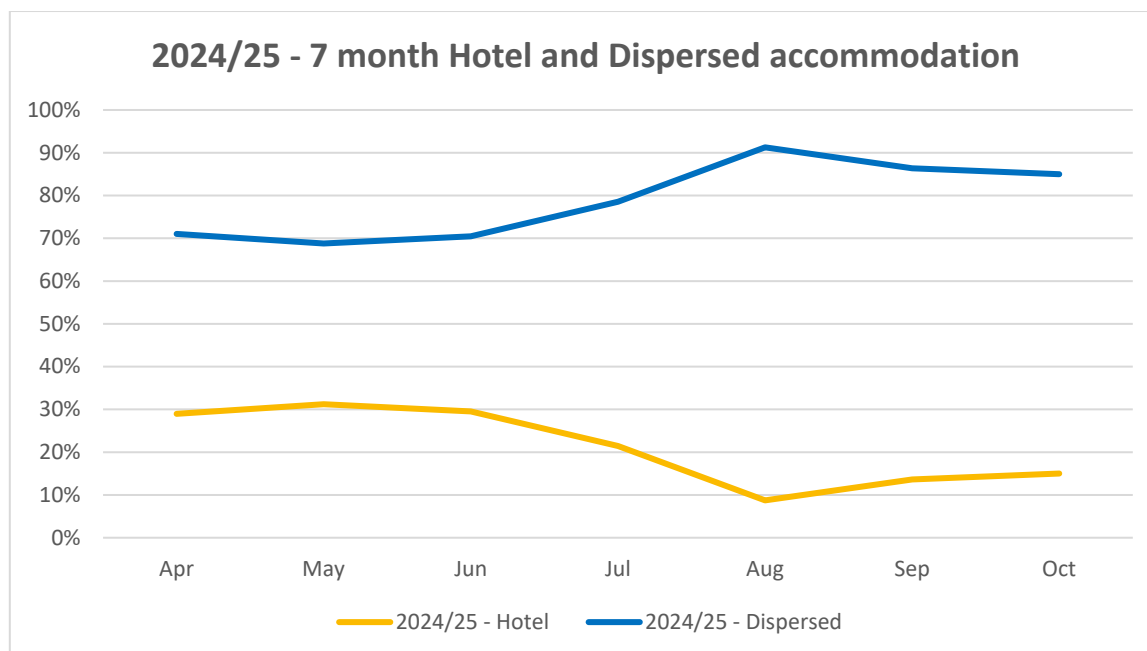
## 18. Resources to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping

- 18.1 Prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping has been at the forefront of Knowsley's approach and a priority of the last Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025. To support the strategy the Council has taken a number of actions and developed initiatives to tackle issues emerging over the last five years.

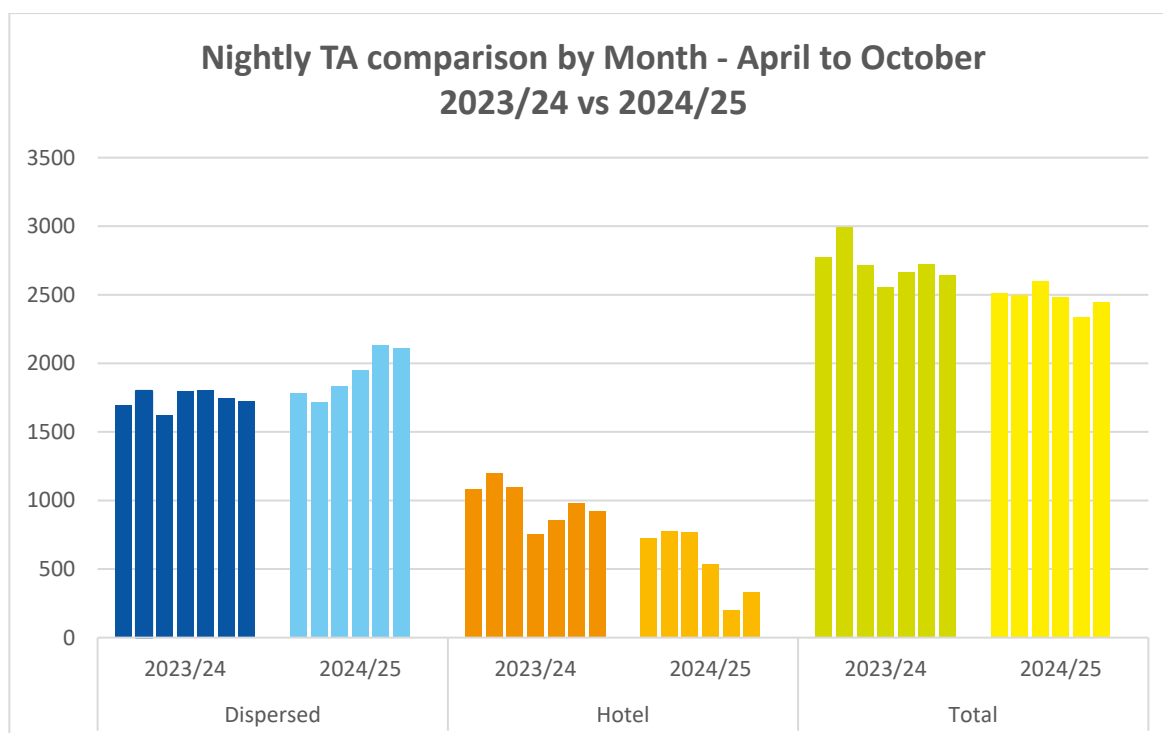
### Temporary Accommodation

- 18.2 The council has made a concerted effort to reduce the use of hotel accommodation and has invested £1.4 million in purchasing accommodation for use as Temporary Accommodation (TA), with plans to invest further to reduce the cost of expensive hotel and nightly paid accommodation. A comparison between 2023/24 figures for nightly paid TA accommodation, hotel and dispersed accommodation and the first six months of 24/25 show that from 40% of TA being hotel placements in May 2023, this had fallen to 28% by March 2024, and at October 2024 hotel usage stood at 15% of TA.

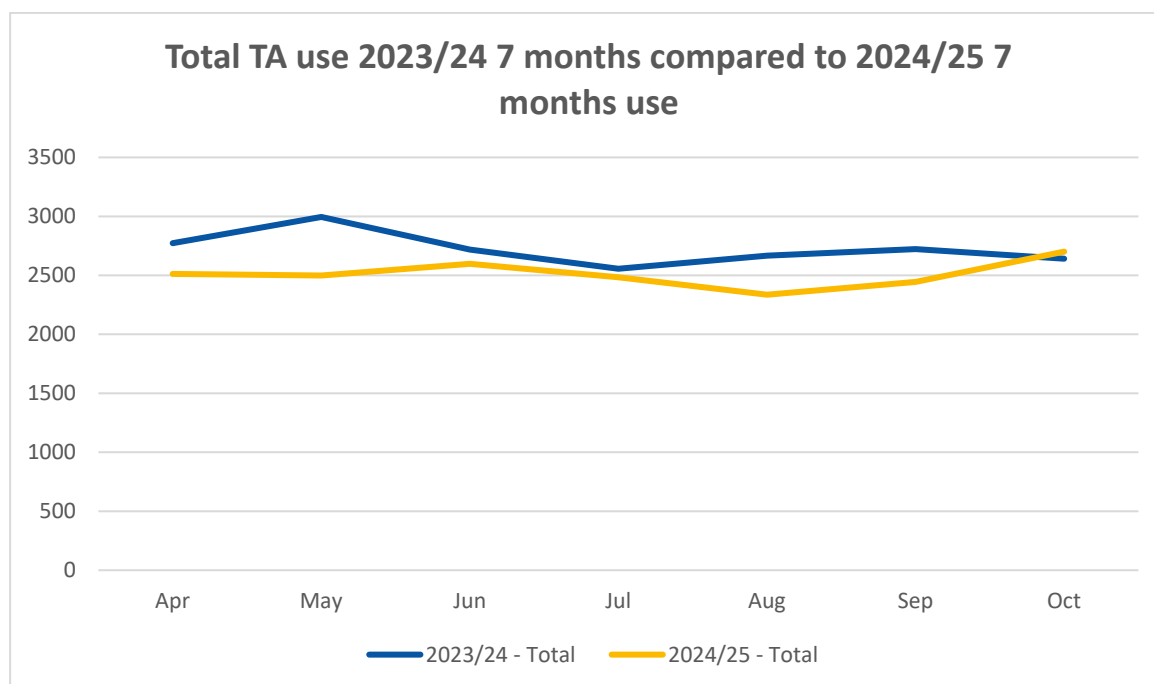




- 18.3 The nightly use comparison per month for April to October 2023/24 and 2024/25 also illustrates a reduction in the number of nights of TA use overall as well as a reduction in the use of hotels. The average monthly nights per month use of TA for April – October in 2023/24 was 2725 nights, for the equivalent period in 2024/25 it has been 2510 nights:



- 18.4 It should be noted however that the use in October 2024 has increased to 2701 nights for the month. This upward trend needs to be monitored:



### Family First and Early Help

- 18.5 The Council's Family First and Early Help approach is led by Children's Services and is based on tiers of preventative support. The Council employs early help co-ordinators who work with partners to identify and co-ordinate a response to families at risk for example due to financial pressures e.g. through hardship fund grants, benefits maximisation and support with employability. There are also early help case managers who work intensively with families who are in greater stress and where children may be on the edge of care, with the aim of resolving issues before they lead to Care Act interventions.
- 18.6 While the approach has led to a reduction in the number of families requiring statutory care interventions. It is acknowledged that there is more to do as a 'whole system'. For example, where a homeless family is found to be intentionally homeless, the housing act duties end, however where there are children involved Children's Services need to respond. This often leads to disruption for the family who are required to move from TA provided via housing to alternative accommodation (usually B&B) funded via Children's Services. There is a need for a more joined up solution. It was also felt that there was a need for floating support to motivate and assist families with the PPP bidding process and with settling into tenancies once housed.
- 18.7 Stakeholders commented that there was a need for more focus on prevention from partners and landlords so that families are identified early, an partners see themselves as a key part of the Early Help approach and intervene with their resources to resolve issues before they escalate to require Children's Service interventions.

### Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

- 18.8 The Council has used DHPs to support its efforts to prevent homelessness. The Knowsley allocation of government funding for DHPs for 2024/25 is £390,985. Between 01/04/24 –

08/12/24 a total of 501 DHP applications have been processed, with 194 awards and 307 being refused. Of the 194 awards these were as follows:

- 100 awards to claimants affected by bedroom tax
- 53 awards to claimants affected by Local Housing Allowance rate restrictions
- 40 awards to claimants not affected by any of the above welfare reforms
- 1 award to a claimant affected by the benefit cap

18.9 Of the 194 awards, 88 were 'one off' payments to clear arrears and the other 106 were weekly ongoing awards. There were 160 awards made to Universal Credit claimants and the other 34 to Housing Benefit claimants.

18.10 DHPs are used to either support people to sustain their housing, or to be able to bid for housing via Property Pool Plus. Some stakeholders are of the view that multiple payments of arrears for some households are not helpful in enabling people to manage their finances and budget more effectively and that payments should be linked to money management skills training. So that people can avoid the need for multiple arrears payments.

### **Housing Supply initiatives**

18.11 The last Local Plan (2016) set an annual target of 450 new houses to be built by 2028. The Council has developed just over 6,000 units of new housing with 20-25% of these being affordable housing, and plans to build another 4,000 units, through a new annual target of around 600 new build units a year. To date housing development has largely focussed on creating balanced communities and attracting working age adults in employment with a focus on developing 3- and 4-bedroom properties.

18.12 Knowsley's tenure profile includes 25% of social housing and is considered to be high when compared to national averages. There is an acknowledged mismatch between the recent developments and the pipeline and the local population's needs. For example, there are just over 1,000 people on the waiting list for 1-bedroom properties and 110 of these households are in priority Band A.

18.13 The 2022 refreshed Housing Development Plan has increased the focus on delivery of social and private developments in Knowsley's townships of Kirkby and Huyton. The Council has encountered difficulties with developers and RP's reluctance to build 1- and 2-bedroom affordable properties, stated as being largely due to financial viability issues. The Council is aiming therefore to work with RP partners to build 1–2-bedroom flats largely in town centres. The Knowsley also lacks large properties suitable for conversion to Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

18.14 Knowsley, like many other local authorities, is facing reductions in social housing lettings and the retreat of PRS landlords from the market, alongside an increase in homeless households, an increase in the level and complexity of needs, particularly amongst single homeless people, and as a consequence of these factors, an increase in the need for TA.

18.15 Within its budgetary constraints and resources, the Council has been pro-active in seeking to address these issues. These activities include:

- a) £1m investment to purchase 9 properties for use as TA and a commitment to invest a further £1.4m. This investment has been agreed on the basis of reducing the Council's subsidy loss on TA and ensuring that homeless households have good quality temporary accommodation while waiting to be housed on a longer term.
- b) Creation of the PRS landlords rescue fund which matches a PRS landlord who wishes to exit the market with an RP that purchases the properties for use as social housing. The Council has been able to support any mismatch in price through the use of its S106 funding.
- c) A rent guarantee scheme for private landlords that has paid £2,500 plus rent in advance and a cash deposit to incentivise private landlords to let to homeless households.
- d) Creation of an Affordable Housing Access Fund, which is using s106 money to provide top up grants of up to £30k to RPs that are looking to supplement their Homes England capital grant to enable schemes to become financially viable.
- e) Partnership with the YMCA to purchase 5 x 2/3-bedroom homes to use as low support supported accommodation for single households.
- f) Purchase or lease of shared accommodation using Affordable Housing Accelerator Fund monies alongside Council funds for use by rough sleepers with low/no support needs.
- g) Use of NSAP and RSAP funding to create shared accommodation with a total to date of 23 bedspaces for single homeless people.

18.16 The Council commissions a team of 3 RSI navigator roles and a 0.5 manager from the Whitechapel Centre. The service provides floating and house share support to a maximum of 70 people with experience of rough sleeping. The maximum staff caseload is 23. Supported housing

18.17 In addition to the above temporary housing and PRS initiatives the Council has a number of Commissioned supported housing and floating support services for young people and those who are care experienced, homeless families, victim/survivors of domestic abuse and single homeless adults. These include:

Homelessness Provision for Adults "Alt Bank House"	YMCA	Homeless Adults over 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 42 self-contained flats</li> <li>• 3 sit up beds</li> <li>• Temporary Housing and Support</li> <li>• 24/7 Staff</li> <li>• Full time shared (Alt Bank and SHAP) Psychologist Assistant</li> <li>• Library, computer centre, communal kitchen, lounge and garden.</li> </ul>
Homelessness Provision for Young People	SHAP	Homeless single young people 16-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 self-contained flats</li> <li>• Emergency, Temporary Housing and Support</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After hours security only</li> <li>• Full time shared (Alt Bank and SHAP) Psychologist Assistant</li> </ul>
Tenancy Support Service	ForHousing	Over 16s at risk of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floating Support to 115 people</li> <li>• 3 Housing Officers</li> <li>• 1 Wellbeing Officer</li> <li>• 1 Specialist Substance Misuse Practitioner</li> </ul>
Supported Lodgings	Local Solutions	16–24-year-olds at risk of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17 Family based placements</li> <li>• 3 crash beds</li> </ul>
Homeless Accommodation for Families “Yates Court”	The Whitechapel Centre	Families at risk of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 flats and support for families</li> <li>• 24/7 Staff</li> <li>• Psychologist available when required through Whitechapel</li> </ul>
DA Provision	The First Step	Accommodation for women and children escaping domestic abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 36 bed Domestic Abuse Refuge</li> <li>• 24/7 Staff</li> <li>• Clinical Psychologist supervisor oversees work of trauma informed workers for women and children include a counsellor for children and a complex needs worker.</li> </ul>

## Housing First

18.18 Knowsley has been part of the Housing First national pilot programme for LCRCA, the programme has been funded between 2019 and 2025, with uncertainty over its future beyond 2025. Housing First has provided unconditional housing and wrap around support to 31 individuals with a history of homelessness and rough sleeping and multiple/complex needs related to homelessness and rough sleeping. This provision has enabled the Council to support some highly vulnerable individuals to sustain a tenancy. At the end of 2024 the pilot had worked with 31 individuals, with 16 people sustaining their tenancy and 6 people having ‘graduated’ from the service. The length of tenure has been:



Length of Housing First tenancies	Number of clients
Up to 6 months:	3
6 months to 1 year:	2
1 year to 2 years:	0
2 years to 3 years:	2
3 years to 4 years:	7
4+ years:	2

- 18.19 While Housing First has enabled the Council to support some individuals with multiple and complex needs it is a time limited programme and is not necessarily suitable for all highly vulnerable people who are homeless or rough sleeping. The data analysis has demonstrated that there is a cohort of single homeless people who require 24/7 support and whose needs, often linked to physical frailty, and/or prolonged alcohol or drug misuse, and other co-occurring conditions, is best addressed through provision of a housing support and care service.
- 18.20 The commissioned services at Alt Bank, Alt Bank, Octavia Court, Shelagh Delayney, Westhead Avenue, Yates Court and The DA Refuge are part funded as exempt supported housing through Housing Benefit.
- 18.21 There do not appear to be any performance or market management issues related to this form of supported housing in Knowsley. The Council is working in partnership with RPs to develop (exempt) supported housing to meet the need for some low needs' groups of single people, some of whom might otherwise sleep rough.

## 19. Recommendations

- 19.1 The 2025-2030 strategy should build on what has already been achieved and take account of the new Government's approach to homelessness and rough sleeping. The themes of the strategy should include:

### **An increased focus on homeless prevention and housing sustainment**

- 19.2 Building on the Early Help approach, all partners across the Council and outside the Council need to adopt a preventative approach to sharing information, resources and insights to enable early support to be put in place.
- 19.3 Use of data analytics to bring together data held across the Council and its partners on families and individuals at risk of homelessness, and/or who are under financial pressure so that interventions can be targeted earlier.

- 19.4 Increased awareness of support available and improved access to information on the council website, as well as support with budgeting money management and the impact on benefits of working part-time or intermittently on income from welfare benefits.
- 19.5 Review floating support services and recommission to meet emerging needs.
- 19.6 Support people into employment and into stable long-term employment wherever possible, including specific support for young people.
- 19.7 Work to ensure that where existing housing is not meeting decent homes requirements that action is taken to improve accommodation quickly as a way to avoid people becoming homeless.
- 19.8 Further develop trauma informed ways of working across Knowsley partnerships with joint training and where needed communities of practice.

### **Providing the right housing and support at the right time**

- 19.9 Improved pathways into supported accommodation and move on, and use of the Duty to Refer.
- 19.10 Provision of housing and support that can meet the needs of two cohorts of people, those with low support needs and/or who are employed and are at risk of or actually sleeping rough and those who require ongoing support and care and for whom there are currently no alternatives to Alt Bank, including a second hostel.
- 19.11 Gather data on those requiring long term care and support with a history of homelessness/rough sleeping and identify suitable long-term housing with care and support provision.
- 19.12 Review sufficiency of outreach and sit up provision to manage increasing rough sleeping.
- 19.13 Work with Children's Service to more effectively support families deemed intentionally homeless.
- 19.14 Review provision of young people's supported housing with a view to providing a Foyer service that can combine support with becoming tenancy ready with employment support and that includes personalised attention, mentoring, coaching and access to mental health support.

### **Increase housing supply**

- 19.15 There is a clear need to increase the supply of affordable housing in areas of high demand (people's expressed preference areas, close to social and support networks).
- 19.16 There is a need to increase the supply of 1- and 2-bedroom accommodation and short-term shared accommodation for those who are homeless without or with low support needs.
- 19.17 The Renter's Reform Act, which will eliminate S21 notices, provides an opportunity to revisit how to increase PRS accommodation access, opportunities to acquire PRS accommodation

from exiting landlords and convert this to social housing, as well as working with all landlords, including social landlords, to reduce tenancy ends.

- 19.18 The Council should look at making the best use of existing housing supply, particularly work to bring more empty homes back into use.

## APPENDIX 1 - STAKEHOLDER CONTACTS

Organisation	Role
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council	Group Manager Housing
	Principal Homelessness Officer
	Housing Solutions team manager
	Homeless Prevention Co-ordinator
	Domestic Abuse Advocates
	Housing Solutions team
	Offender co-ordinator
	Intense support officers
	TA contracts and strategy officer
	Homelessness accommodation commissioning manager
	Mental health accommodation commissioning manager
	Head of Permeance and sufficiency - Care Leavers
	Head of whole life commissioning
	Service Manager - Commissioning
	Assistant Executive Director early Help and Children's Social Care
	Service Manager CLA and Care Leavers
	Head of public health
	Head of Revenue and Benefits
	Head of Adult Social Care
	Head of Safer Communities
	Head of Stronger Communities
	Head of Housing and Property
	Service Manager Mental Health
	Team Manager Multi-Agency Hub (MASH)
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA)	Homelessness lead
HM Prison & Probation Service	Senior Probation Officer – Sex Offender Learning & Desistance Team
Merseyside Police	Chief Inspector

## APPENDIX 2 - DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Document Title	Author
Liverpool City Region Tenancy Strategy (2022-25)	
Armed Forces Covenant	Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Improving Lung Health in Knowsley Public Health Annual Report 2023/24	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Knowsley 2030 A Long-Term Strategy for Knowsley	The Knowsley Better Together Partnership
Knowsley Council Plan 2025-2030	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Housing Strategy 2022 – 2027 Building on Success and Strengthening Our Offer	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Private Sector Housing and Affordable Warmth Strategy (2019 – 2024)	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Knowsley 2030 Evidence Base Report	Knowsley Better Together
Children And Young People in Knowsley (An Inter Pack)	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Executive Summary All Together Fairer: Health Equity and The Social Determinants of Health in Cheshire and Merseyside	Institution Of Health Equity
Knowsley Combatting Drugs Partnership Update 2024-25	Rob Begg (Public Health Programme Manager)
Knowsley Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2025 Pdf	Knowsley Health And Wellbeing Board
Draft Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Report: Drug Use Disorder (2023)	Dr Sarah McNulty and Andrew Donaldson
Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 - 2025	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy January 2016	Cllr Michael Murphy
Consideration For a New Homeless Hostel in Knowsley (Briefing)	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Knowsley Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2025	The Knowsley Partnership

Knowsley MBC Housing Needs Assessment (2021)	Arc4
Drugs Strategy: Programme Plan 2023-25	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council – Public Health
Protected Characteristics in Knowsley JSNA Data Profile (October 2023)	Knowsley Council
Whole Life Commissioning -Strategy Commissioning Plan 2024 – 2027	Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley

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