

Briefing Note

To Corporate Performance Management, Efficiency & Effectiveness
Scrutiny Committee

cc Ron Sims, Assistant Director
Diane Channings, Assistant Director

Date 11th June 2013

Subject **PI 323: Number of Households Living in Temporary Accommodation**

The following further analysis has been carried out in order to assist Members in scrutinising this area of performance.

There were 55 households in temporary accommodation on 31st March, an increase of just over 50% since 31st March 2012 when there was an unusually low figure of 36. Generally over the last five years, the numbers have averaged around 40-45. National figures were published on 6th June, so the benchmarking information previously provided can be updated as follows:

Housing Authority	Number in TA		Number per 1000 households	
	Q3	Q4	Q3	Q4
Birmingham	806	922	1.92	2.20
Coventry	40	55	0.31	0.42
Dudley	52	55	0.40	0.43
Sandwell	24	17	0.20	0.14
Solihull	46	46	0.53	0.53
Walsall	42	45	0.40	0.43
Wolverhampton	42	54	0.42	0.54

During the year ending 31st March 2013, we have received 2270 homeless applications, which is a decrease of 4.9% from the previous year. We have accepted a full housing duty to 171, which is an increase of 8.2%, whilst the number of cases where we have been able to prevent homelessness has reduced by 10.5% from 645 to 577. Some increased use of temporary accommodation has been almost inevitable, but there are a number of measures being adopted to address this dip in performance.

The actions we are taking include:

- Management scrutiny of each new case placed in temporary accommodation to consider whether there are other options eg is this a case where an Introductory Tenancy could be offered?
- Renewed focus on the time that households spend in temporary accommodation eg every Monday the whole team is now setting time aside to check on bids made by households who have been accepted, and to bid on their behalf where required.
- Ensuring that every household whose behaviour is preventing them being rehoused is offered support and that enough effort is made to engage with them however difficult and challenging they may be.
- Close monitoring of all casework, to ensure that any imminent rooflessness is identified (providing customers approach us before they are already roofless).

At the end of April, the snapshot figure had reduced from 55 to 50, which would have made our performance the second best after Sandwell amongst the comparators mentioned earlier.

As a service, we have for the past several years paid close attention to the reasons for homeless acceptances, and used this information to develop and improve preventative measures – our Mortgage Arrears Advice Service and our range of services for young people are particularly good examples of this. The current major issue for us is the number of private tenants presenting to us because their tenancies have been terminated or they can no longer afford the rent. Welfare Reforms are a major factor, and the measures we are introducing to prevent more homelessness include additional preference on the waiting list for affordability issues (Decision Sheet 18th April 2013 refers), and a review of designations to make more of our stock accessible to younger people. However, Welfare Reforms also have other impacts that may not be immediately obvious – for example, three bedroom maisonettes have always been in good supply and have often been taken by homeless families, but many families are no longer able to take them because of the under occupation penalty.

Our Annual Report for the year ensuring 31st March 2013 will shortly be available should any Members be interested in receiving further information about the service.



Sian Evans
Head of Service – Housing Options