

**FAREHAM**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING  
OPTIONS STRATEGY**

**2014 – 2017**

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## INTRODUCTION

Fareham's Homelessness and Housing Options Strategy sits below the overarching Housing Strategy.

The Housing Strategy describes the local housing needs within Fareham and sets out a series of priorities for meeting these needs. The priorities are based on an overall aim from which stem a set of 8 objectives. The principal aim being:

- **To work in partnership with a range of agencies to give all of the residents of Fareham the opportunity of a decent home that they can afford.**

Within the context of this aim, the objective relevant to the Homelessness and Housing Options Service is:

- **Provide a sensitive and responsive prevention based service which gives good quality advice, assistance and support to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and, where appropriate, to secure good quality accommodation;**

To achieve this objective, the Homelessness and Housing Options Strategy has been informed by a review of homelessness in the Borough. Consultation has taken place with officers, local stakeholders, service users and partner organisations. The Strategy takes into account key local, regional and national issues and priorities.

The new Strategy aims to consolidate the successes and measures of the 2010 Strategy and set out not only what is required to maintain the service, but further develop it.

In order to do this, 4 key areas have been identified:

- To provide advice, assistance and support to enable homeless and vulnerable households to address their housing needs and to lead independent lives;
- Adopt sustainable initiatives that deliver housing solutions accessible to those in housing need and that minimise reliance on the use of temporary accommodation;
- Wherever possible to prevent homelessness from occurring in Fareham by working in partnership with other statutory and independent sector agencies;
- Monitor the demand on the service and outcomes, to inform future provision and direction.

Fareham Borough Council recognises that homelessness is a complex issue that encompasses and impacts upon health, employment, education, offending, finance, relationships and families and therefore in delivering this Strategy, the Council will work in partnership with a number of external agencies.

## The Strategic Context

The main policies and themes that have emerged since the last Strategy that impact upon homelessness and the work to prevent it are:

- **Reform of the Housing Revenue Account**
  - *in April 2012 the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system was ended, enabling Councils to keep their rental income and use it to fund their housing stock*
- **Localism Act 2011 – Reform of homelessness and allocations legislation**
  - *introduced powers to set qualification criteria for the Housing Waiting List and enables Councils to discharge accepted homelessness duties through an offer of accommodation in the private rented sector*
- **Welfare Reform Act 2012 – Reform of welfare benefits**
  - *introduced a number of changes to the welfare benefits system*
- **Increase in Discretionary Housing Payment Budgets**
  - *to help with reductions in Housing Benefit following the removal of the spare room subsidy, provide rent deposits or rent in advance to enable households to move to smaller homes*
- **Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out launched nationwide**
  - *the No Second Night Out campaign is intended to prevent someone having to sleep rough for more than one night and thereby reduce the risk of rough sleeping becoming an entrenched behaviour*
- **Launch of Help to Buy Scheme 2013**
  - *created by the Government to help working people own their own home, by offering 5% deposits*
- **Mortgage Rescue Scheme**
  - *launched in 2008, to help home owners at risk of losing their home to remain in occupation as tenants of a housing association*

- **Extension of the Support for Mortgage Interest Scheme**
  - *available to homeowners receiving certain income related benefits, help is given towards the interest payments on mortgages and loans for certain repairs and home improvements*
- **Comprehensive Spending Review**
  - *each year the Government announces how it will spend tax payers money and continue its drive to reduce the gap on the national debt, the last few years have seen significant reductions in public sector funding, impacting upon the Council's ability to deliver services*
- **National Practitioner Support Service – Gold Standard**
  - *launched in April 2013, to deliver and administer a framework for providing continuous improvement in front line housing services through the development and delivery of the Gold Standard Challenge*
- **Ending of the Supporting People Programme**
  - *a Government funded programme aimed at making sure people receive the housing related support they need to live more independently, reducing the need for people to move into residential settings*
- **Introduction of Affordable Rent and Flexible Tenancies**
  - *Affordable Rent is a model for setting social housing rents introduced in 2011, it requires rents to be set at up to a maximum of 80% of market rent. Landlords are also able to offer flexible tenancies tailored to the housing needs of individual households*
- **The Affordable Homes Programme**
  - *the 2011 – 2015 programme introduced major changes, intended to try and increase housing supply. It invited local authorities to bid for funding to enable them to build housing again.*
- **Use of Right to Buy (RTB) Receipts**
  - *In 2012 the Government introduced changes which allowed the Council to enter into an agreement to retain a proportion of the capital receipt from RTB sales to build new affordable homes or purchase existing homes. A condition of the agreement requires the Council to make use of the capital receipt within two years of its collection.*

## KEY FEATURES OF THE BOROUGH

### Population Age Profile

| Age Group | 1991 Census | 2001 Census | 2011 Census |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| All Ages  | 99,262      | 107,977     | 111,581     |
| 0-4       | 6,354       | 5,871       | 5,578       |
| 5-9       | 5,921       | 6,568       | 5,798       |
| 10 -14    | 5,813       | 7,340       | 6,696       |
| 15-19     | 6,404       | 6,428       | 6,683       |
| 20-24     | 6,316       | 4,650       | 5,761       |
| 25-29     | 6,976       | 5,461       | 5,406       |
| 30-34     | 7,429       | 7,592       | 5,474       |
| 35-39     | 6,909       | 8,735       | 6,985       |
| 40-44     | 8,157       | 8,420       | 8,584       |
| 45-49     | 7,131       | 7,188       | 8,990       |
| 50-54     | 5,807       | 8,153       | 8,053       |
| 55-59     | 5,617       | 7,008       | 6,961       |
| 60-64     | 5,217       | 5,764       | 7,836       |
| 65-69     | 4,920       | 5,449       | 6,577       |
| 70-74     | 3,795       | 4,731       | 5,244       |
| 75-79     | 3,098       | 3,848       | 4,491       |
| 80-84     | 2,061       | 2,523       | 3,387       |
| 85-89     | 936         | 1,466       | 2,024       |
| 90+       | 401         | 782         | 1,053       |

### Average House Prices: April - June 2013

| AREA                  | AV PRICE |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Winchester            | £388,295 |
| Hart                  | £332,846 |
| East Hampshire        | £324,324 |
| New Forest            | £289,417 |
| Test Valley           | £281,243 |
| Basingstoke and Deane | £258,528 |
| Eastleigh             | £232,214 |
| Fareham               | £231,292 |
| Havant                | £219,428 |
| Rushmoor              | £211,406 |
| Gosport               | £176,422 |

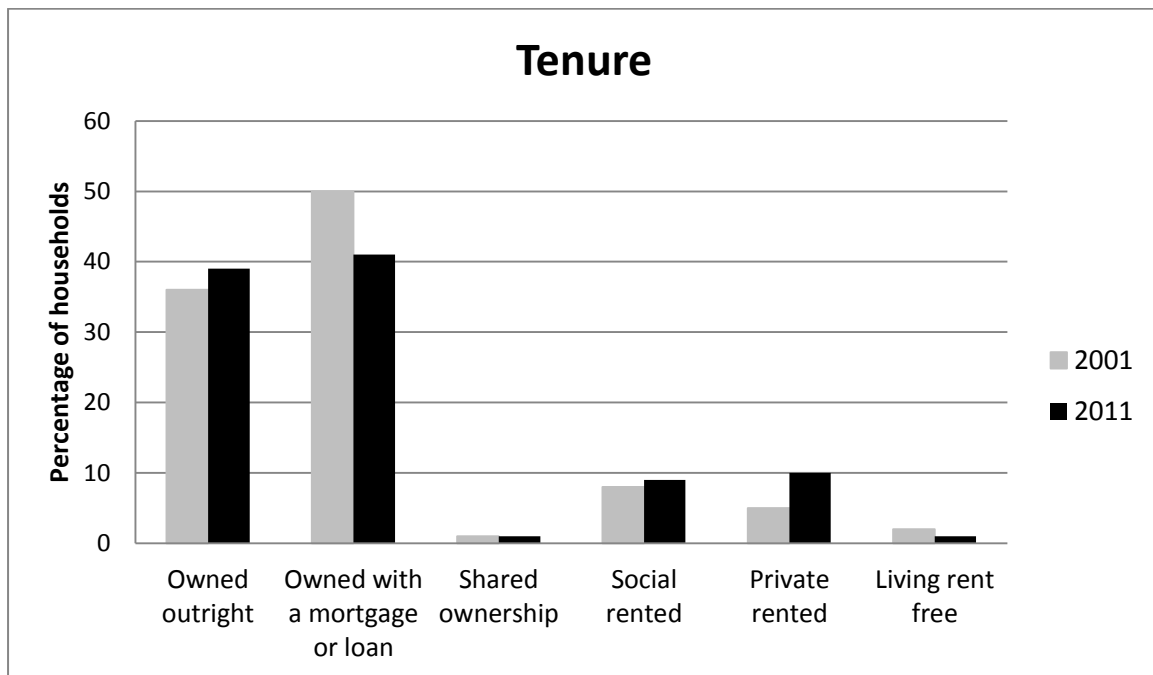
### **Fareham**

**Average house price  
£231,292**

|               |          |
|---------------|----------|
| Detached      | £313,602 |
| Semi-detached | £209,192 |
| Terrace       | £196,351 |
| Flat          | £129,462 |

Source: Land Registry

## Tenure Breakdown



Source: 2011 Census

## Ethnic Profile

| Place               | % White British | % Mixed     | % Asian or Asian British | % Black or Black British | % Chinese   |
|---------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Hampshire           | 91.07           | 1.26        | 2.09                     | 0.97                     | 0.62        |
| Basingstoke & Deane | 88.36           | 1.59        | 2.57                     | 1.41                     | 0.98        |
| East Hampshire      | 92.05           | 1.16        | 1.70                     | 0.89                     | 0.36        |
| Eastleigh           | 90.81           | 1.32        | 2.81                     | 0.75                     | 0.50        |
| <b>FAREHAM</b>      | <b>92.56</b>    | <b>0.99</b> | <b>2.06</b>              | <b>0.72</b>              | <b>0.45</b> |
| Gosport             | 93.25           | 1.12        | 1.50                     | 0.62                     | 0.62        |
| Hart                | 89.36           | 1.43        | 2.52                     | 1.21                     | 0.55        |
| Havant              | 93.13           | 1.12        | 1.63                     | 0.60                     | 0.43        |
| New Forest          | 92.80           | 1.19        | 1.36                     | 0.74                     | 0.34        |
| Rushmoor            | 86.72           | 1.54        | 3.29                     | 1.76                     | 1.43        |
| Test Valley         | 91.71           | 1.23        | 1.76                     | 0.88                     | 0.88        |
| Winchester          | 90.64           | 1.32        | 2.12                     | 1.24                     | 0.44        |
| Isle of Wight UA    | 91.73           | 1.07        | 1.85                     | 1.14                     | 0.29        |
| Portsmouth UA       | 84.47           | 1.47        | 4.86                     | 2.21                     | 1.18        |
| Southampton UA      | 81.75           | 2.24        | 6.38                     | 2.15                     | 0.59        |

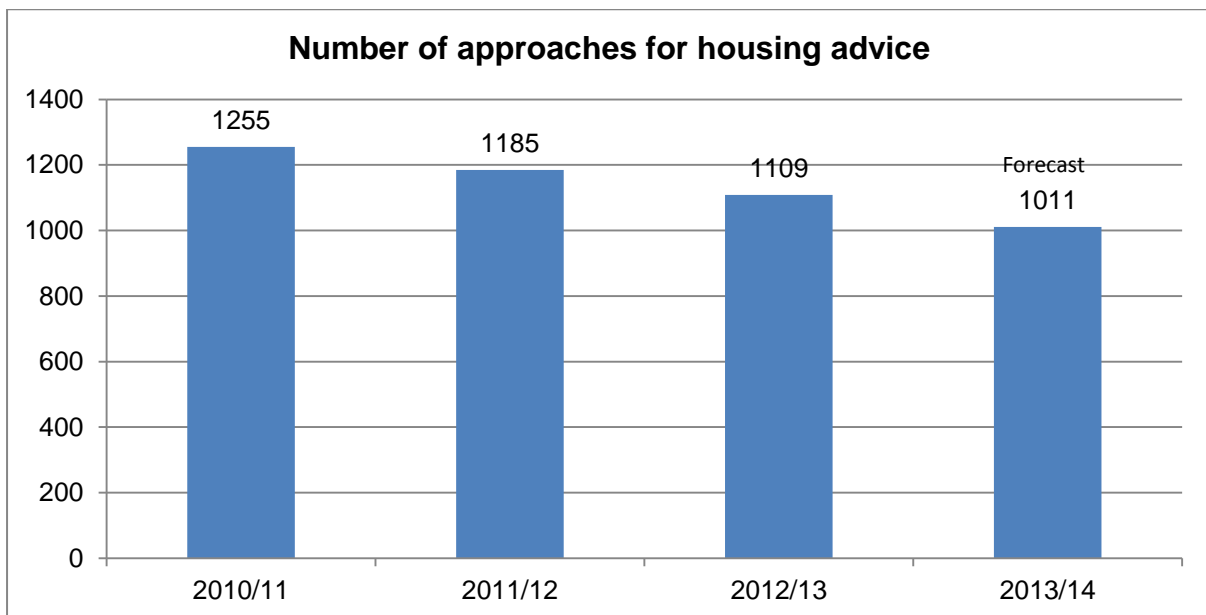
Source: 2011 Census

## DEMAND, ISSUES AND OUTCOMES

A review of homelessness, the causes and outcomes has been carried out to determine the Borough's priorities for addressing homelessness and providing a responsive and effective prevention service. The key findings are shown below.

### Households accessing Fareham Borough Council's Housing Options drop in service.

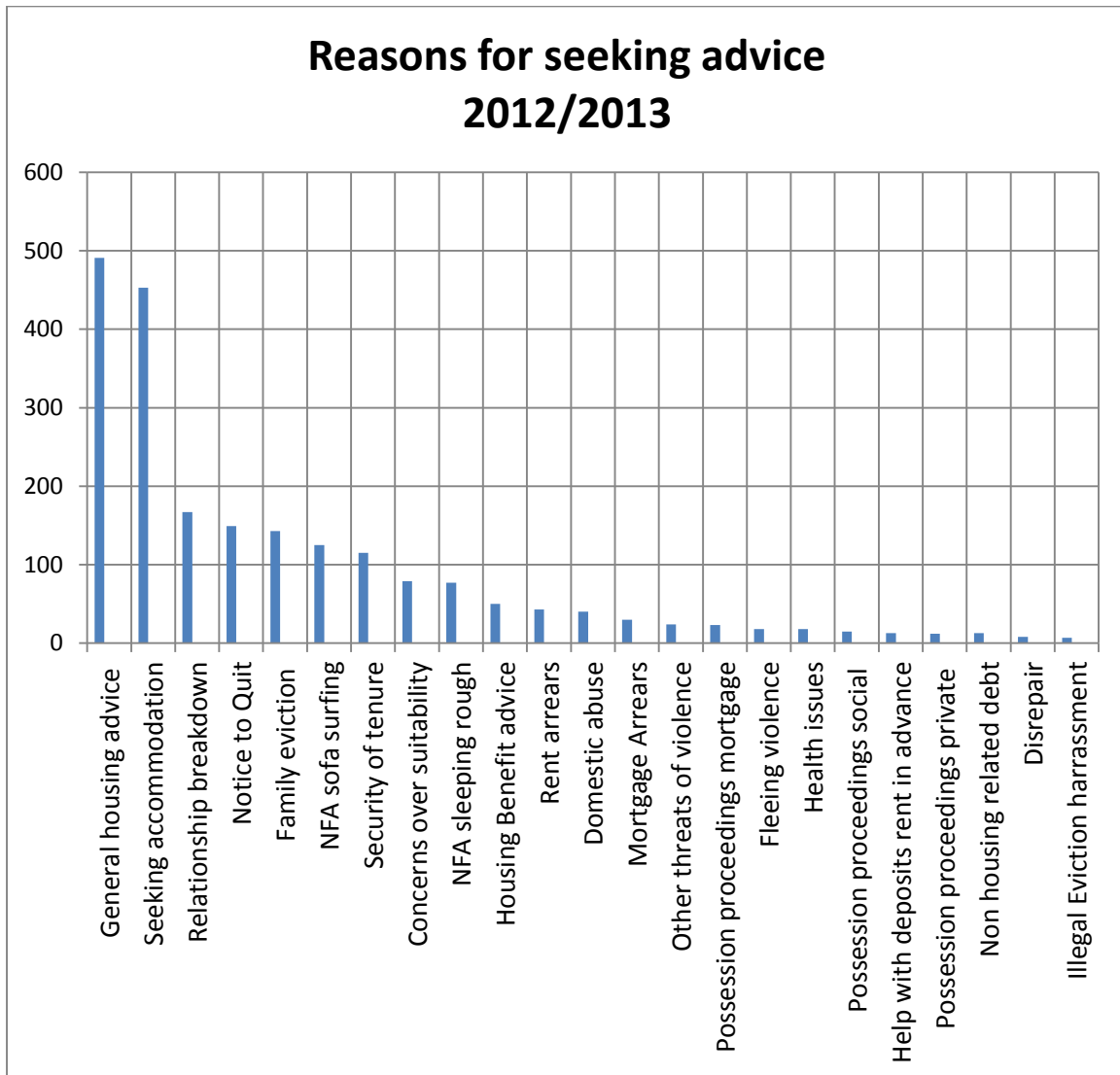
The Housing Options Team operates a daily drop in service for anyone with a housing enquiry. Customers are able to see a Housing Options Officer between 9.30am and 4.00pm to discuss their housing situation. An assessment of their circumstances is undertaken to determine the level of advice and assistance required. This may be assessing an application to join the Housing Waiting List, signposting or referring to other organisations, contacting the client's current housing provider to establish the position and determine the level and nature of assistance required to prevent a homeless situation from arising and / or taking a homelessness application.

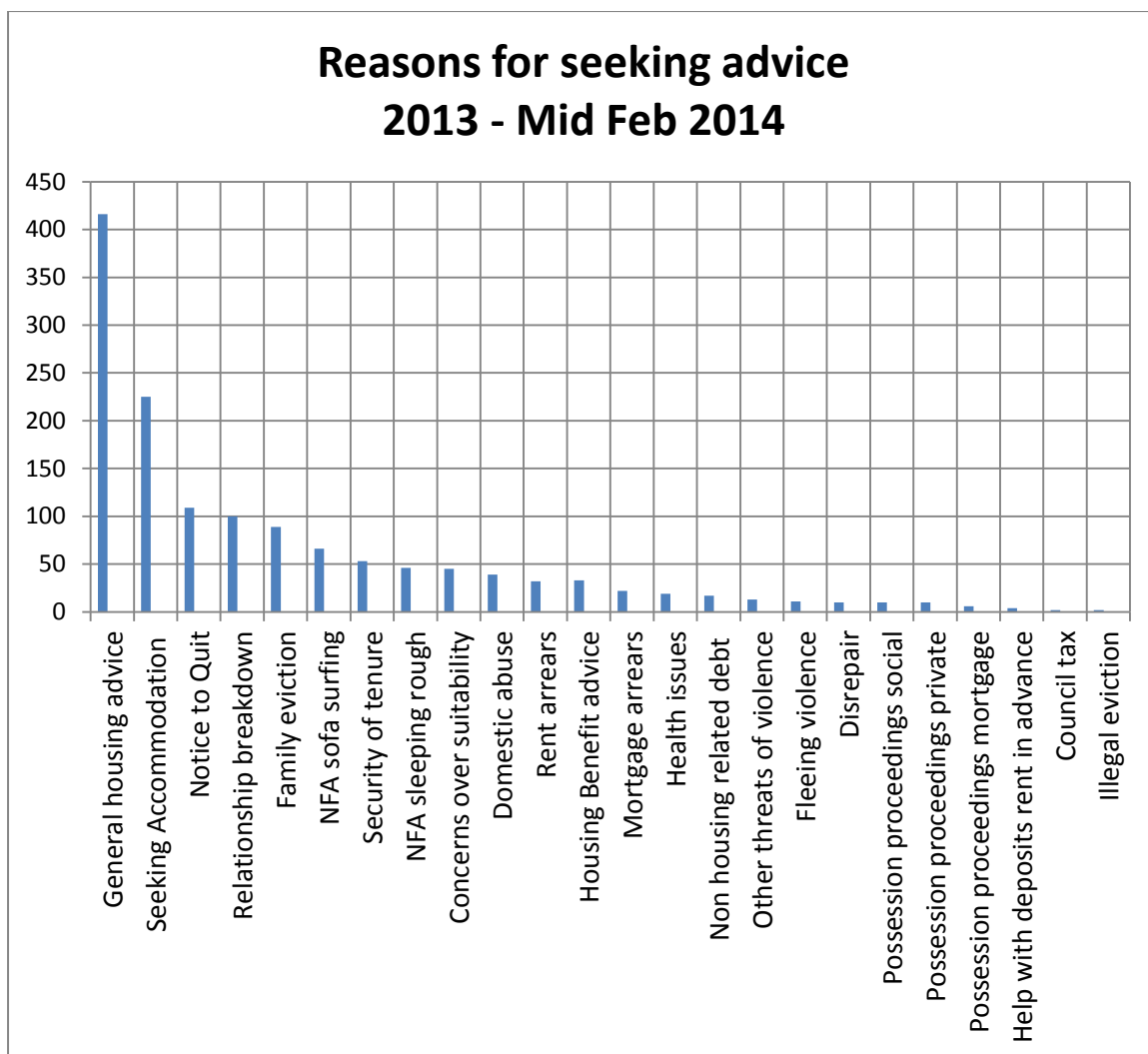


The graph shows a decline in the number of households approaching the Council for assistance over the last 3 years. However, the complexity of cases has increased and the economic situation continues to impact upon the housing market and the ability of many households to secure and retain accommodation on their own behalf and therefore relying more on the Council's assistance.



## Reasons for Approaching for Housing Assistance





Whilst the above chart does not depict a full 12 months, the forecasted number of approaches for 2013/14 is set to be in the region of 1011, approximately 100 less enquires than 2012/13.

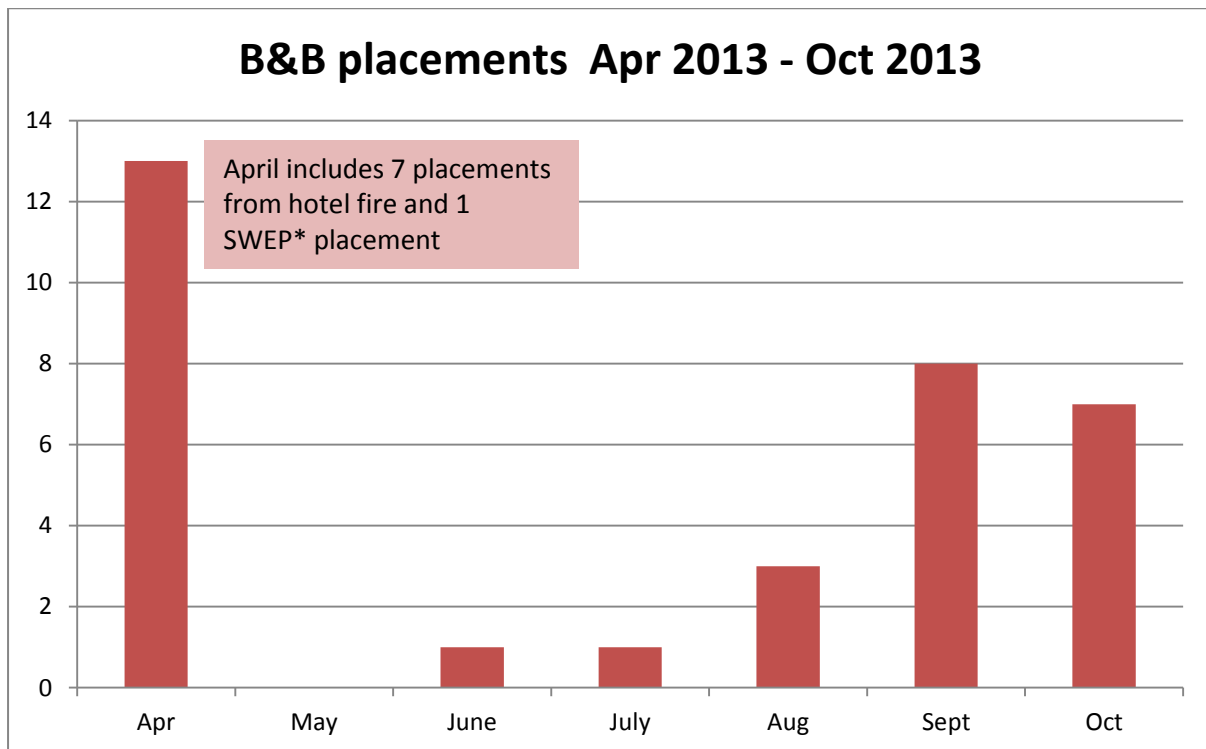
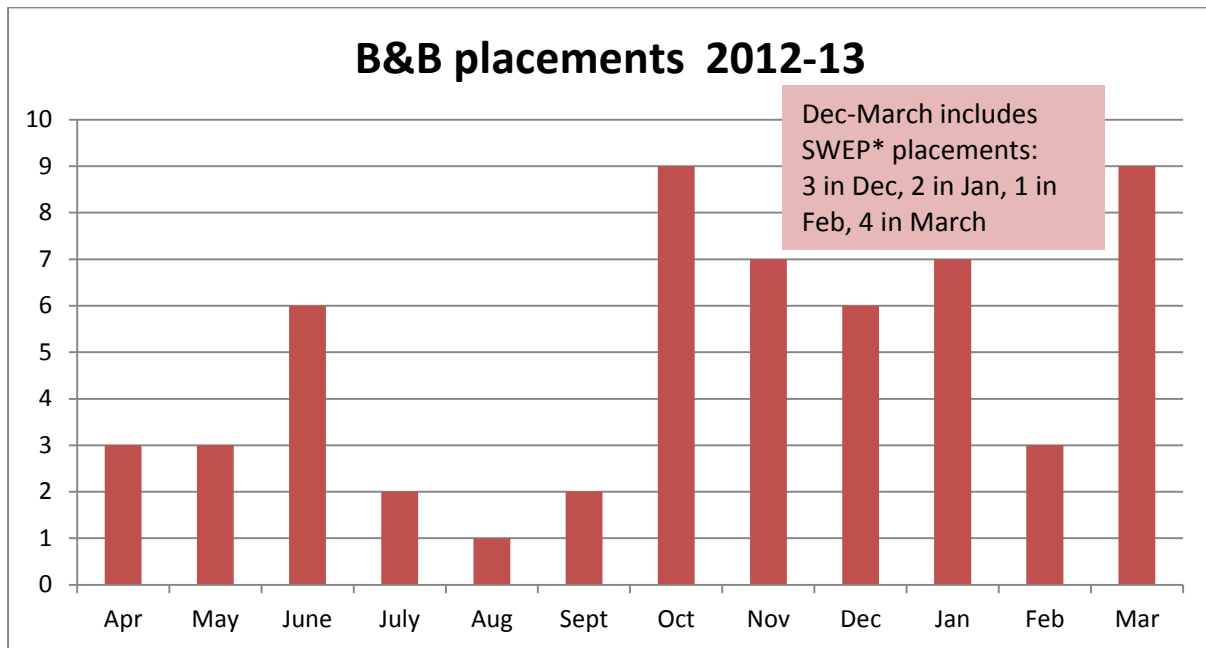
Even though there is not a full 12 months of data to compare, there are some obvious differences. Most notably the numbers requesting assistance with finding accommodation, those claiming to be of no fixed abode/sofa surfing and those under the threat of possession proceedings due to mortgage arrears, have all fallen.

Reasons for approaching the service that have seen an increase are general housing advice, non-housing related debt, domestic abuse and disrepair/Environmental health issues.

The increase in the number of households seeking assistance due to non-housing related debt is to be expected given the continuing economic climate. It would appear that customer expectations are beginning to be influenced by the difficulties in accessing any form of accommodation with the number of approaches specifically seeking accommodation falling steeply; however, there is an increase in people seeking general housing advice.

## Bed and Breakfast Placements

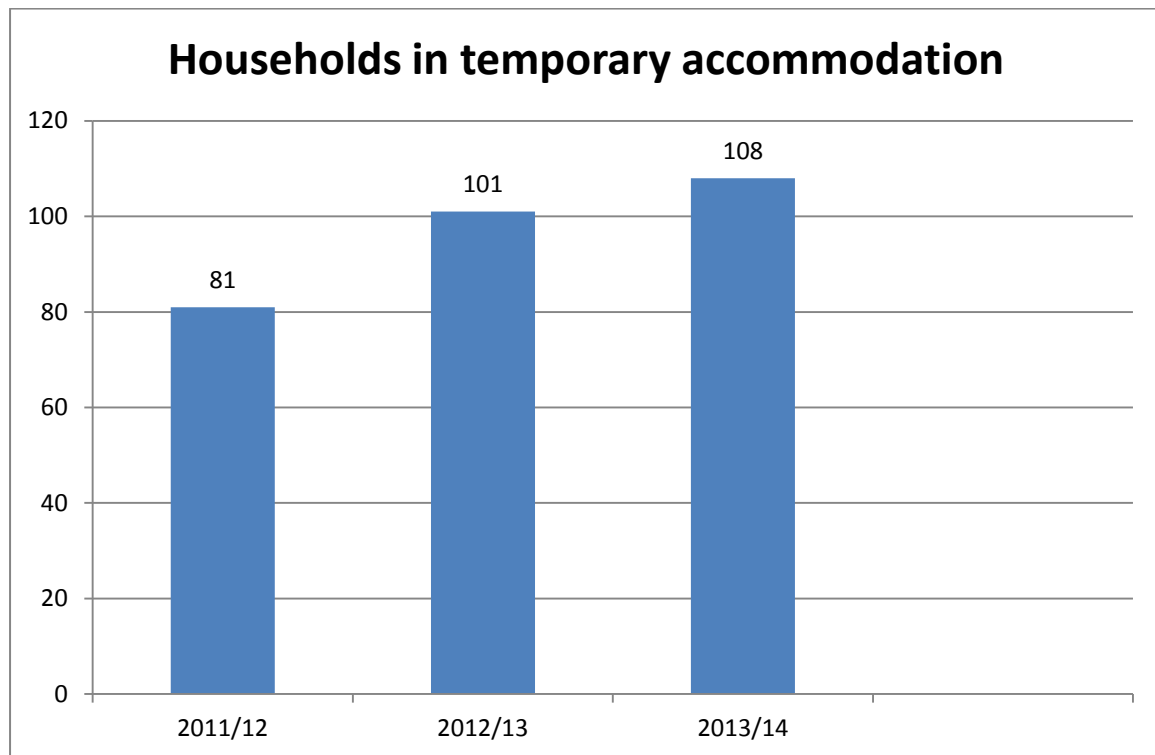
The urgency of some approaches for assistance and the increasing difficulty in accessing accommodation in the private rented sector has contributed to the number of households being placed in Bed and Breakfast Accommodation in the past 12 months. This has led to a major review of how we manage our stock of temporary accommodation to ensure more units are available to avoid prolonged stays in Bed and Breakfast Accommodation.



\*SWEP – Severe Weather Emergency Placement

## Demand for Temporary Accommodation

The table below shows the average number of households housed in temporary accommodation at any one time. This demonstrates the steady rise in the number of households needing the assistance of the Council.

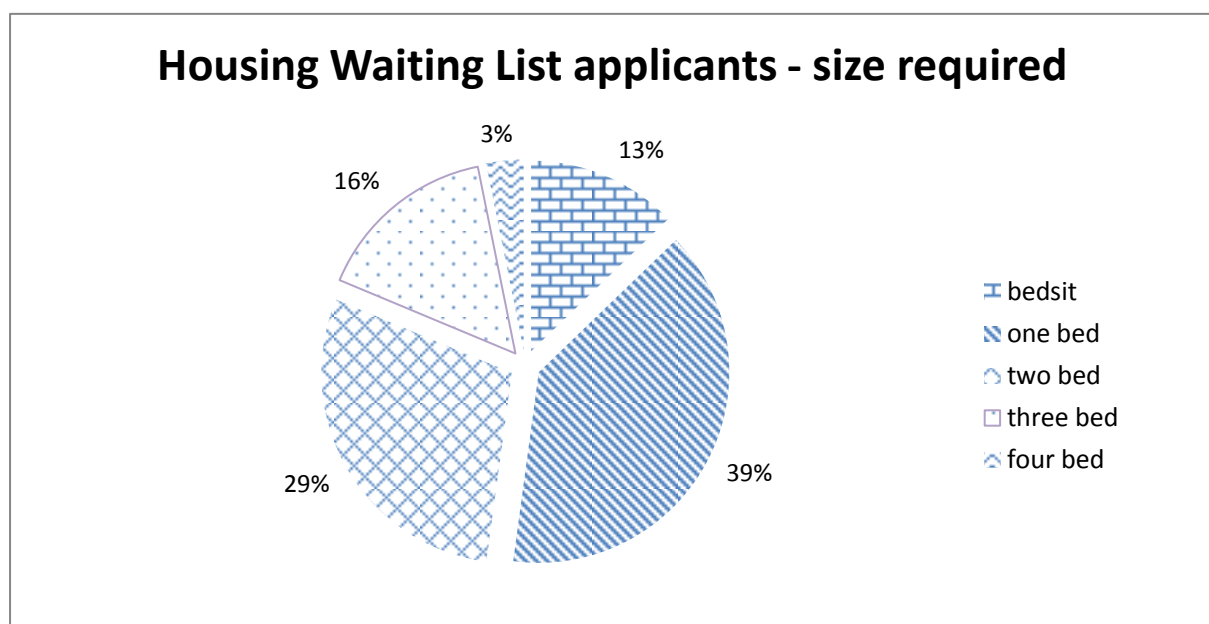
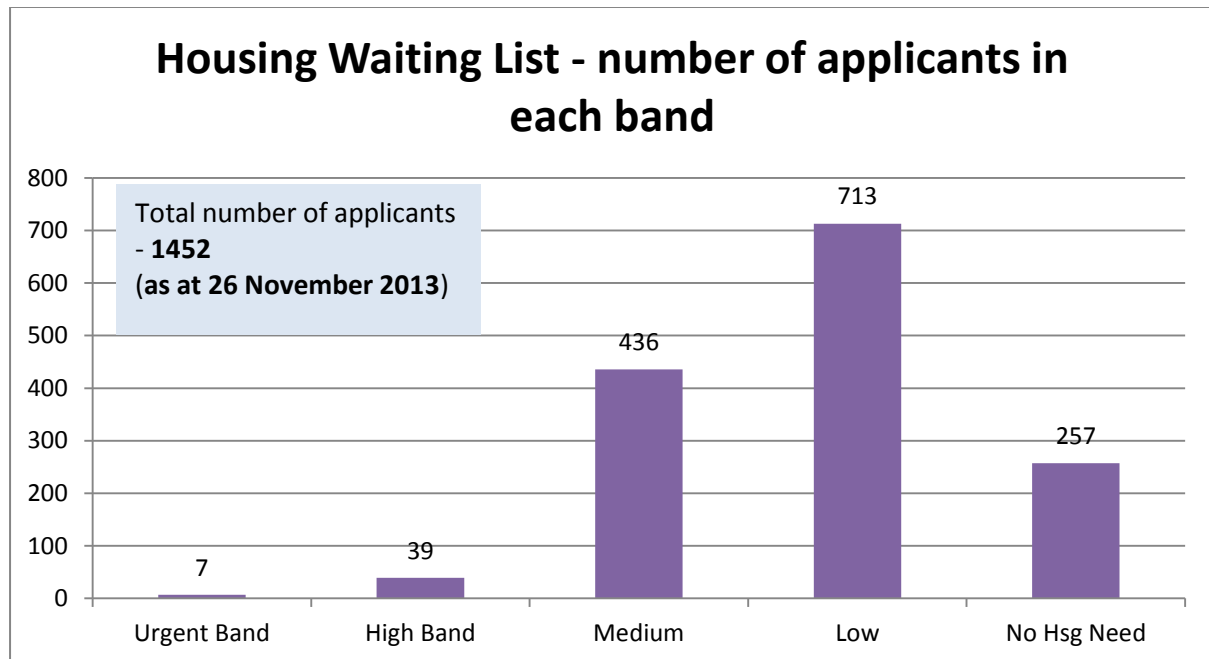


## Average length of stay in temporary accommodation

Until the creation of the new Initiatives Team the management of temporary accommodation (TA) had not been a priority for the Housing Options Team. With increasing pressure being placed on TA, it became essential to increase movement through it and apply consistent move on times for each type of accommodation. The new Initiatives Team is tasked with monitoring and managing moves in and out of all units of TA and combined with a change in the Allocations Policy (which gives a greater priority to those in TA), the average waiting time for a move out of TA has been reduced from 2.6 years to 1.6 years.

## Households on Fareham Borough Council's Housing Waiting List

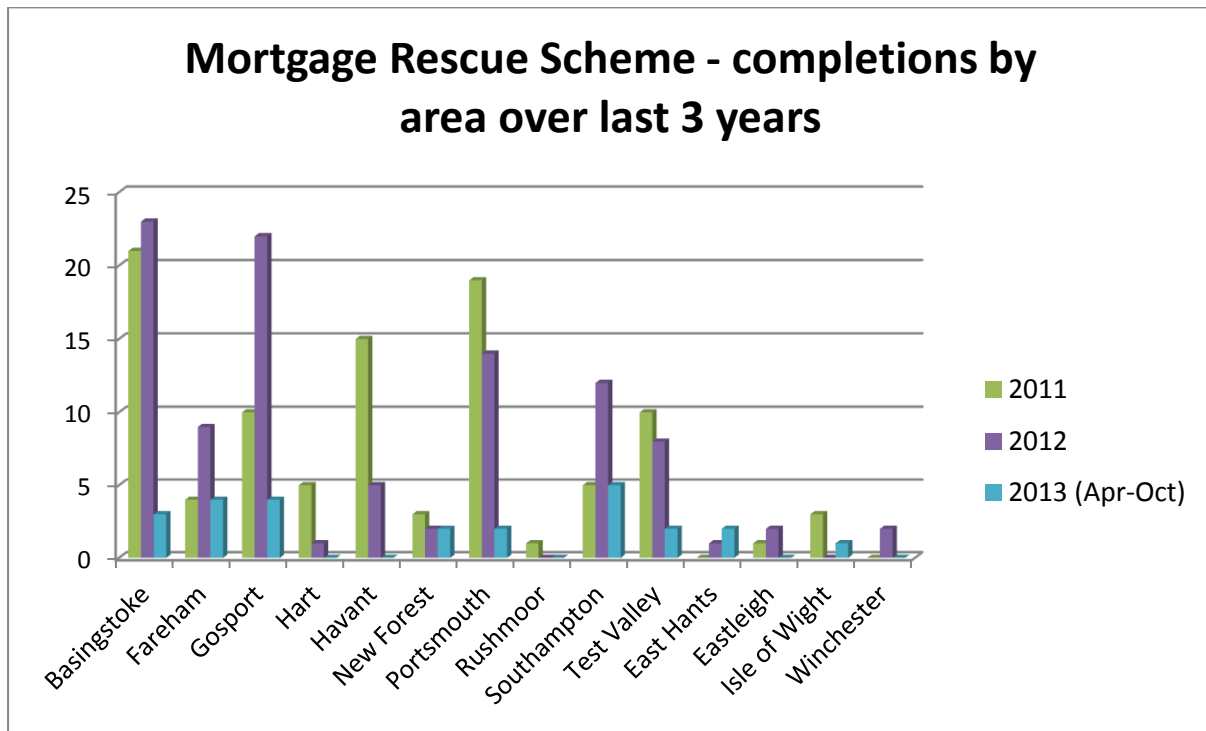
Following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, the Allocations Policy was reviewed and stricter local connection and qualification criteria introduced. The Policy has since been subject to a further review resulting in the proposal to remove the NO Housing Need Band. This is being proposed to rationalise the administration associated with the Housing Waiting List and to prevent raising the expectations of households that have little or no prospect of being housed. Prior to the review there were 2600 households registered on the Housing Waiting List.



1 bedroom properties remain the most highly demanded accommodation.

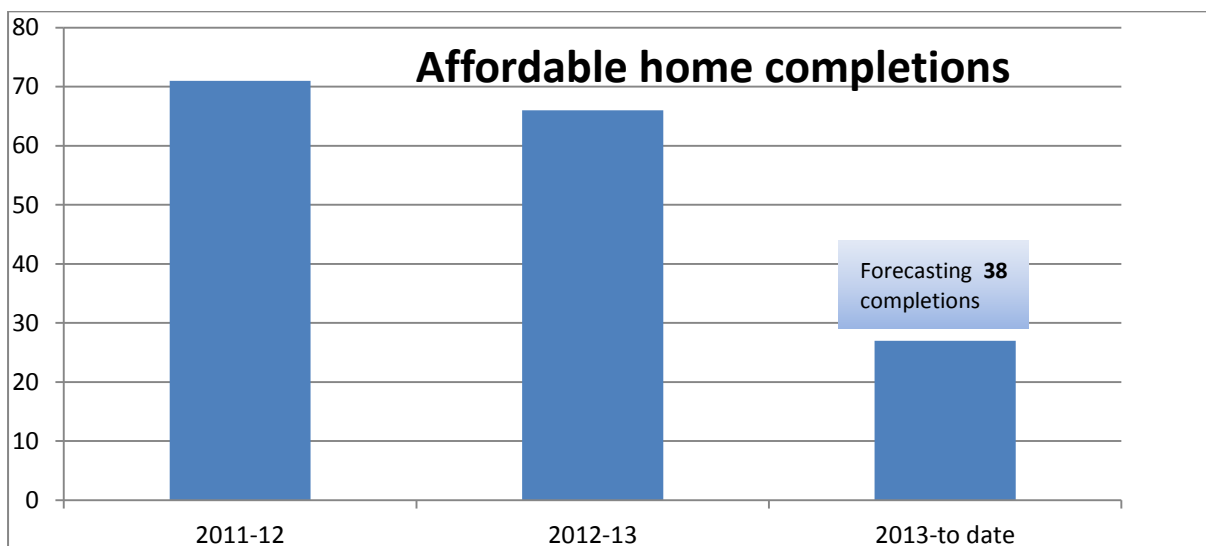
## Households assisted through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme

The Mortgage Rescue Scheme was launched by the Government in 2008 and initially had a slow start in Fareham as the criteria for households to be accepted onto the scheme was high. In the last couple of years the qualifying thresholds have been reduced and Fareham has successfully referred a higher number of cases, compared to authorities of a similar size. The scheme however is being withdrawn in March 2014.



## Affordable Housing Development

The number of new affordable homes being built to meet the demand from the Housing Waiting List is set to fall over the next couple of years. This in turn impacts upon waiting times and movement through temporary accommodation.



# BEST PRACTICE IN HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

## National Practitioner Support – Gold Standard Challenge

The National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) was set up in April 2013 specifically to support local authorities to deliver early intervention and prevention housing options services.

They developed a 10 step continuous improvement approach that starts with a pledge for local authorities to '*strive for continuous improvement in front line housing services*' and culminates in an application for the Gold Standard Challenge.

The Gold Standard Challenge is a peer review scheme designed to help local authorities to deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services.

The Gold Standard is based on ten local challenges:

1. To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services
2. To actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
3. To offer a Housing Options prevention service to all clients including written advice
4. To adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative
5. To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support
6. To develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both client and landlord
7. To actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme
8. To have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs
9. Not to place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation
10. To not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks

It is not proposed to seek the accreditation of the Gold Standard, however, the 10 local challenges will be incorporated within the objectives of the service and help inform our key actions.

## **CONSULTATION EVENTS**

### **Homelessness and Housing Options Event**

An event was held in December 2013, to which all organisations involved with housing options and homelessness in the borough were invited. The morning aimed to reflect upon the way in which the Council and its partners responded to the challenges presented by those in housing need. Through discussion groups a series of issues were raised and views sought as to how best these could be met.

The event was well attended and useful debates took place around the most pressing issues facing homelessness services. Through the discussion groups, the areas of youth homelessness, welfare reform, accessing the private rented sector and rough sleeping were considered in more depth and the groups were asked to put forward their ideas as to how these groups and issues could be assisted and taken forward.

### **Strategic Housing Away Day**

Following the above event, Officers within the Strategic Housing Division held an away day to review the previous year's highs and lows, achievements and areas for improvement and to look at the priorities for the division for the forthcoming year. Officers within the Housing Options Team reflected upon the discussions held at the Homelessness Event and the changes that had been introduced in response to legislation and the need to respond to the increasing demand for temporary accommodation.

### **Customer Feedback**

A second mystery shopping exercise was carried out in April 2011. The service had come a long way in the two years following the first exercise carried out by Shelter. Weaknesses identified such as not seeking enough details to be able to give advice over the phone had been addressed, with officers now logging details of calls and making entries on the Housing Options Database as to the advice given and the next steps to be taken. The quality of advice given had also improved with explanations of options and legislation being offered where appropriate.

Since this exercise, formal customer feedback has not been sought; however, there are plans to introduce regular customer surveys of the housing options drop in service which can be accessed online as well as via the more traditional methods. These surveys will seek feedback over the interview process and the quality of advice given.

In addition the service will be subject to the systems thinking approach being introduced throughout the Council. This will hopefully highlight where processes and procedures can be reduced to enhance the service offered and provide for a better customer service.



**OBJECTIVE 1: *To provide advice, assistance and support to enable homeless and vulnerable households to address their housing needs and to lead independent lives.***

This objective is delivered by the Housing Options Team consisting of 6 Housing Options Officers (HOOs), available on a daily basis to provide advice and assistance to anyone in housing need.

The advice given is tailored to the person and their individual or household's needs. The HOOs provide information to equip people with the knowledge and tools to help themselves and make informed decisions about the options available to them.

In order to deliver a comprehensive service which meets the needs of our customers, it is essential for the HOOs to remain up to date and skilled in all aspects of housing options. The 6 HOOs are supported by a Senior Housing Options Officer, responsible for monitoring individual officer performance, disseminating best practice, identifying gaps and weaknesses in skills and knowledge bases and ensuring appropriate training or job-shadowing opportunities are accessed.

#### **Information, initiatives and options available to households in housing need**

- Website

The Housing Options Team maintains pages on the Council's website, which enable households seeking housing advice to access information relevant to their particular circumstances. A self-help tool, factsheets, and links to other websites and organisations are all available to help households resolve their housing situation.

- Fareham Supporting Families Programme

The Troubled Families Programme was launched by the Prime Minister in 2011; the Government is committed to working with local authorities to help 120,000 troubled families in England turn their lives around by 2015.

Fareham has established a Supporting Families Programme led by the Community Safety Team. Households approaching the Housing Options Team that meet the criteria of the programme can be referred, it is hoped that such intervention and support will assist households to remain in their accommodation

- MARAC ( Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee)

These are Police led multi agency meetings held once a month. The meetings serve as a forum where key agencies, including the Police, Housing, Fareham & Gosport Family Aid and Social Services discuss and identify co-ordinated multi agency

responses to households who are suffering from domestic abuse. A whole range of options can be considered before it is necessary for someone to move home.

- Protocol over social housing evictions

All housing associations with stock in the borough are required to sign up to a Partnership Agreement. This sets out the roles and responsibilities of each organisation in respect of their development, management and allocation of affordable housing. Included in the agreement are the expectations over joint working in respect of tenants facing eviction due to rent arrears. Early notification of a potential eviction enables a HOO to engage with the tenant and potentially avoid a homelessness situation from arising.

- Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

This scheme enables local authorities to provide additional financial assistance to existing Housing Benefit or Council Tax customers to help meet housing costs. The fund can also be used to provide rent deposits and rent in advance in certain circumstances. Housing Options Officers work closely with colleagues in Housing Benefits to ensure DHP is used effectively to prevent homelessness or secure alternative accommodation.

- Tenancy Rescue Fund

The tenancy rescue fund (funded out of the Homelessness Prevention Grant from Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)) can be used to prevent homelessness in the private rented sector. Examples of its use are: paying for damages caused by a third party, irregularities with Housing Benefit, or rent arrears caused by an ignorance of being able to claim benefits.

- Repossession Prevention Fund

At the start of the economic downturn the DCLG gave a one off grant to every local authority to issues as loans up to the value of £5,000 to assist households with mortgage or rent arrears. Fareham Borough Council received £38,000 and there are still funds available to help prevent homelessness.

- Local Welfare Assistance

In April 2013 the County Council awarded each of the districts housing departments £10,000 to use to assist those in housing crisis. The fund is not to be used to pay for things such as rent deposits or rent arrears as there are already budgets in place for these types of issues, but it can be used to help with the cost of removals for example or to bridge a gap in income to enable someone to remain in accommodation or secure it. Unfortunately, this fund will not be made available again, however, if it can be demonstrated that for relatively small awards, placements in Bed and Breakfast have been avoided or moves out of temporary accommodation are achieved, the Council may need to consider setting aside a small percentage of its Homelessness Prevention Grant to continue to assist in these circumstances.

- Housing Waiting List

For the majority of households approaching the Council in housing need, it is appropriate to establish if they are registered or eligible to apply to the Housing Waiting List. The HOO will be able to determine whether they have a realistic chance of being offered accommodation in the near future via the Housing Waiting List, or if they need to consider and explore other housing options.

|    | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Intended Outcome</b>  |
|----|--|--|
| 1a | Senior Housing Options Officer to ensure the best use is made of all available funds including DHP in the prevention of homelessness and the securing of alternative accommodation | To limit the number of households becoming homeless  |
| 1b | Review training needs on a regular basis of all Housing Options Officers, to maintain knowledge and skills and to keep up to date with changes in case law and best practice       | Ensure customers receive a comprehensive advice service. Through which they are made aware of all their options and other agencies able to give support and assistance |
| 1c | Review the Housing options website, factsheets and housing options plans   | Information is user friendly, current and accessible   |
| 1d | Strive to achieve Gold Standard local challenges relevant to this objective  | Provide an enhanced housing options service  |

**OBJECTIVE 2: *Adopt sustainable initiatives that deliver housing solutions accessible to those in housing need and that minimise reliance on the use of temporary accommodation.***

The changes introduced under the Welfare Reform Act have impacted upon the Council's ability to access the private rented sector to meet the needs of homeless households. With the number of new build properties enabled falling over the last couple of years, the focus has to be on overcoming the barriers to access the private rented sector, if sufficient accommodation options are going to remain available to meet the growing demand.

**Housing solutions and support available to households in housing need**

- New Initiatives Team

In 2013 the Housing Options team restructured to create a new Initiatives Team, the team have 3 main functions:- Managing temporary accommodation, allocating council and housing association accommodation and developing new private rented initiatives.

- Managing temporary accommodation

To ensure temporary accommodation is used to its maximum potential, the Initiatives Team is responsible for creating move on plans for households as soon as they are allocated a unit of temporary accommodation. A maximum length of stay has been determined for each type of temporary accommodation, with the aim of achieving higher throughput and reducing the number of households placed in bed and breakfast accommodation.

- Launch of new private rented sector initiatives

Three new schemes will be launched in 2014 to attract and encourage landlords to work with the Council. Each of the schemes will hopefully be attractive in their own right, as they range from a basic tenant finder scheme, to a full property management service. With the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 it is anticipated that more households will be accepted as homeless with the aim of discharging the rehousing duty into the private rented sector. Whilst most families seek to gain the security of a council or housing association property, the fall in the number of properties being developed means that long term housing solutions are now considered to be 12 months or more in the private rented sector.

- Allocating council and housing association accommodation

For some households in temporary accommodation their move on plan will include being registered on the Housing Waiting List for an offer of Council or housing association accommodation. The Allocations Officer is part of the new Initiatives Team and is able to advise as to the position and prospects of such households and help inform move on plans.

- Tenancy Support Officer ( temporary 12 month appointment )

To be able to help and support households to move on from temporary accommodation and to increase access to the private rented sector, it will be necessary for the Accommodation Officer to devote the majority of her time to developing and building relationships with landlords and letting agents. To release her to do this, the work she undertakes to support tenants and resolving tenancy management issues will be taken over by a new post of Tenancy Support Officer. To coincide with the launch of the new private rented initiatives, this will be a temporary 12 month appointment, funded from the Homelessness Prevention Grant. Extension of the post will be dependent upon the success and take up of the new private rented schemes.

- Purchasing new Temporary Accommodation

Changes have been introduced to enable the Council to use Right to Buy (RTB) receipts of £800k. This is expected to achieve the acquisition of 8 properties for use as temporary accommodation. Delegated power has been granted to enable a rolling programme of acquisitions to take place in future within the available budget.

- Mortgage Rescue Scheme (MRS)

The MRS scheme was launched by the Government in 2008, to help owner occupiers facing repossession the ability to remain in their home and become a tenant of a housing association. Households assisted under this scheme have to meet certain criteria and the Money Adviser role has been crucial to the assessment of affordability post rescue, as there is little point in investing large sums of money to rescue the property if it remains unaffordable in the long term.

Whilst numbers assisted under this scheme have been relatively small, it has nevertheless meant that fewer units of temporary accommodation have had to be found and the closure of the scheme in March 2014 will mean more households will be seeking the assistance of the local authority and possibly requiring temporary accommodation.

- Affordable Housing Programme

One of the key factors which has an impact on homelessness and the demand for temporary accommodation is the shortage of affordable housing in the Borough. With a higher than national average level of owner occupation and a lower than average social housing stock, the Council has continued to set ambitious targets for

the number of new affordable homes delivered per year. The economic conditions however, continue to impact upon the programme and its delivery.

|    | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Intended Outcome</b>   |
|----|--|---|
| 2a | Achieve move on from TA within agreed timeframes for 70% of households in year 1, 2014/2015, increasing to 90% in year 2, 2015/2016              | Increase capacity of existing TA, resulting in fewer placements in Bed and Breakfast Accommodation  |
| 2b | Monitor the success and impact of the Tenancy Support Worker, prior to 12 month period coming to an end, to determine whether to extend the post | Accommodation Officer released to secure more accommodation in the private rented sector.<br>Rent arrears reduced in TA<br>Better management and intervention around cases of Anti-Social Behaviour |
| 2c | Launch new private rented initiatives in 2014 with the target of taking on 45 properties within the first 12 months of operation                 | Meet the future demand for temporary accommodation and minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation  |
| 2d | Purchase 8 existing properties using RTB receipts  | Increase available stock of temporary accommodation   |
| 2e | Work with Housing Associations to develop new affordable housing in the borough  | Increase range of affordable housing to meet housing need in the borough  |
| 2f | Strive to achieve Gold Standard local challenges relevant to this objective  | Provide an enhanced housing options service   |

**OBJECTIVE 3: *Wherever possible to prevent homelessness from occurring in Fareham by working in partnership with other statutory and independent sector agencies.***

Some homeless situations can be prevented through the actions and interventions of other agencies. The Housing Options Team seeks to maintain and develop these relationships, and wherever possible support such agencies by offering additional funding, use of office space, assisting with joint visits and the sharing of information.

### **Partnerships and services supported by the Housing Options Team**

- Money Advice Worker

In response to the economic crisis and in order to assist with applications to the Mortgage Rescue Scheme the Council decided to use £20,000 per year of its Homelessness Prevention Grant to fund a part time Money Adviser. The post based at Fareham Citizens Advice Bureau was recruited to in September 2009 and has proved invaluable in assisting households to remain in their accommodation. Housing Options Officers refer households to the Money Adviser where debt or poor money management can be identified as the threat of homelessness. The Money Adviser will endeavour to prevent homelessness from occurring by drawing up financial statements, attending court, exploring formal money management options such as IVA's, Bankruptcy, Debt Relief Orders, helping with Benefit claims, negotiating with creditors, lenders and landlords.

Funding for this post has been agreed up until April 2015, it is hoped to be able to continue and possibly extend the hours of this post for the life of this strategy.

- Rough Sleepers Outreach Worker

As part of the national roll out of No Second Night Out, Fareham Borough Council in conjunction with Gosport Borough Council, Havant Borough Council and Two Saints Housing Association, successfully bid to recruit a full time Rough Sleepers Outreach Worker. Working out of 101 Gosport Road (direct access hostel), the Outreach Worker is funded to engage with rough sleepers across the 3 boroughs. As many rough sleepers have additional vulnerabilities such as drug or alcohol issues or debt problems, the Outreach Worker ensures that referrals are made to the appropriate support agencies, so that work can be started to address the issues surrounding long term rough sleeping. The Outreach Worker also engages with landlords in the private sector to assist rough sleepers into accommodation where possible.

- Credit Unions

Offering a service to those applicants unable to gain a bank account, credit unions can assist with the budgeting process to help reduce and prioritise debts. The Hampshire Credit Union trading as United Savings and Loans can offer rent deposits and loans at a far lower interest rate than the doorstep lenders, helping to prevent rent arrears and potential homelessness. United Savings and Loans hold “drop in” surgeries at the Council Offices and other venues within the Borough, enabling people to discuss their situations and establish whether they could benefit from joining.

- Accommodation Resource Centre

The Accommodation Resource Centre (ARC) run by Two Saints Housing Association acts as the gateway agency for young homeless people aged between 16 and 25 in Fareham and Gosport. Funded primarily by Hampshire County Council Supporting People Programme (which is currently under review) the centre provides housing advice and assistance to young people, often acting as mediators, their key aim is to enable young people to return home or access suitable accommodation. Hampshire County Council Children’s Services also fund ARC to undertake their initial assessments. Following the Southwark ruling the County worked with the 11 district authorities to agree a working protocol for 16 /17 year olds. This protocol delivers a coordinated approach to meeting the housing and welfare needs of young people.

- Supported Housing Panel

The Supported Housing Panel was originally established in 2006, it sought to achieve a consistent, fair and managed approach to all supported accommodation in Fareham and Gosport (excluding the direct access hostel, the women’s refuges and sheltered accommodation). The two districts and providers have engaged with the panel process over the years and through Gosport Borough Council commissioned a database to manage referrals and waiting lists for each of the supported housing schemes. It was hoped that the on-going management of the database would be taken over by the Fareham and Gosport Supporting People Housing Co-ordinator, however, this post has been in a state of flux ever since it was introduced and following recent announcements by Hampshire County Council over the ending of the Supporting People Programme, it is now uncertain how the panel process will be managed in future. Even more concerning is the future of a number of supported housing schemes across the two boroughs, as funding has been significantly reduced the long term viability of some, could be in jeopardy.

- Floating Support

Currently commissioned through the Supporting People Programme there is a generic short term floating support service and a specialist mental health floating support service operating across Fareham and Gosport. Housing Options Officers are able to refer households to these services who are in need of support to enable them to maintain their accommodation and avoid becoming homeless. The future of



these services is in question following the announcement of the withdrawal of the Supporting People Programme.

|    | <b>Action</b>   | <b>Intended Outcome</b>   |
|----|---|---|
| 3a | Continue to monitor the success and outcomes of the Money Advice Worker and determine whether funding is available to extend the post for the life of this Strategy   | Number of evictions due to rent or mortgage arrears reduced.<br>Homelessness is prevented as a result of better money management, budgeting and awareness of benefit entitlement  |
| 3b | Monitor the success of the Rough Sleepers Outreach Worker and determine whether funding can be extended beyond the 12 months funded by the Regional Rough Sleepers Group  | Reduction in the number of rough sleepers in the borough.<br>Quick engagement to prevent entrenched rough sleeping<br>Co-ordinated response to rough sleeping with Police, Community Safety & Substance Misuse Agencies |
| 3c | In partnership with Children's Services agree the future role of the Accommodation Resource Centre following the reduction in Supporting People funding   | Maintain the gateway agency to ensure 16/17 year olds are given independent advice as to their future accommodation options.<br>Prevent homelessness through mediation and support                                      |
| 3d | Prepare for the impact the reduction in the Supporting People Programme will have on homelessness services across the borough through the reconfiguration of services and the targeting of remaining funds to meet statutory duties | Maintenance of as many homelessness prevention services as possible   |
| 3e | Strive to achieve Gold Standard local challenges relevant to this objective   | Provide an enhanced housing options service   |

**OBJECTIVE 4: *Monitor the demand on the service and outcomes, to inform future provision and direction***

To ensure that resources and new initiatives are directed appropriately, it is essential that the demand on the service is captured and analysed. Whilst improvements have been made to the reporting functionality on the Housing Options Database, there is still some concern that it is a standalone database that is not linked to any other systems in use. Therefore, investigations into other housing options modules will continue to be made.

The success of the new private rented schemes will be closely monitored. A business plan will be drawn up setting out the expectations for each scheme, with forecasts for income and potential losses.

In May 2013 the Allocations Policy was reviewed to recognise the changes brought in through the Localism Act 2012. Early indications are that the changes introduced have had a positive effect on the movement of households through temporary accommodation, reducing average waiting times by a year. However, close scrutiny will need to be carried out over the next 12 months to ensure that the lowering of priority on the Housing Waiting List for households living with family does not incentivise approaching the Council and applying as homeless.

|    | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Intended Outcome</b>  |
|----|--|--|
| 4a | Continue to explore purchasing the Housing Options module from Orchard   | Improved data capture, and monitoring information to inform future plans and Strategies  |
| 4b | Produce a Business Plan for the new private rented sector schemes prior to their launch                                    | To be able to monitor the success of the new schemes and support the case for continuing with the posts of: Temporary Accommodation Co-Ordinator and Tenancy Support Officer |
| 4c | Continue to monitor the impact the new Allocations Policy has on homelessness and movement through Temporary Accommodation | Increased movement through temporary accommodation.  |
| 4d | Strive to achieve Gold Standard local challenges relevant to this objective  | Provide an enhanced housing options service  |

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

We are committed to ensuring this strategy remains a live document and delivers tangible results for those in housing need in the borough. To ensure that this happens, the Action Plan will be reviewed as part of regular objective monitoring for individual officers within the Strategic Housing Division.

Responsibility for ensuring that this strategy delivers key objectives lies with the Council's Housing Options Manager, / who will ensure that the Action Plan is updated on an annual basis with a progress report submitted to the Health and Housing Policy Development and Review Panel for scrutiny by Members.

Key performance indicators which reflect a number of the strategy's objectives are reported on a monthly basis to senior managers. Managers within the Strategic Housing Division meet regularly with partner agencies, to review progress against targets and changes required to continue to meet housing need in the borough.