Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review

2019-2024

1. Introduction

Aim

To inform future strategy by describing the homelessness situation in Chorley and assessing for gaps in provision. Considering local and national trends it aims to ensure a service fit for the foreseeable future.

Definitions

Homeless

A person is homeless who has no home available to reasonably occupy. This extends beyond those who are roofless to include those; sofa surfing, in unfit housing, facing domestic violence or other circumstances where they have nowhere to reasonably occupy.

Threatened with homelessness

If within the next 56 days someone is likely to become homeless (as above), they are considered 'threatened with homelessness'.

About

Homelessness is often a consequence of other more complex underlying issues, the lack of a stable living environment exacerbates these issues and seriously harms a person's potential across a range of factors such as employment, education, health and finances. Homelessness therefore can spark its own series of events creating worse problems for those affected and their families. As problems become more complex further intensive and costly service interventions are required to correct. As such early intervention with the aim to prevent has a threefold advantage over attempting to relieve at the crisis point – it is; more effective, more efficient and better for those affected.

The prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping is therefore central to ensuring a thriving and prosperous local community and has always been a key priority for Chorley Council. Since the Homelessness Act 2002 Local Authorities have had a statutory duty to formally review and publish their homelessness strategy at least every five years. This review fulfills this duty by updating and renewing *'The Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and Review 2016-19'*. It publishes information and data on current levels of homelessness and rough sleeping in Chorley, reviewing the suitability of current local service provisions by considering changes since the previous strategy and indicators of change in the foreseeable future. Using data gathered from local casework records to identify trends in presentations it compares service demand with local prevention resources and the national policy environment to identify potential challenges and opportunities in local service provision. From this analysis the review aims to inform and improve local strategy in tackling homelessness in the coming years.

2. Current and future levels

2.1 Current levels of homelessness and rough sleeping in Chorley

Data gathered from local caseload records is considered below to describe the current homelessness situation in Chorley. This data is placed alongside regional and national data to illustrate the levels of homelessness and rough sleeping in Chorley in the regional and national contexts. Equality data is also reported and placed alongside baseline data to assess the relative levels of representation across various groups for potential inequalities.

Homeless presentations

Year	Total	Prevented	Relieved	Full Duty Accepted	Advice Only
2015	1,440	(58%) 842	16	12	(40%) 570
2016	1,366	(60%) 822	10	12	(38%) 522
2017	1,302	(60%) 786	11	8	(38%) 497
2018	1,196	(62%) 742	86	0	(31%) 368
2019 (YTD)	1,021	(69%) 700	82	6	(22%) 233

There has been a downwards trend in the total number of people presenting as homeless since 2015. There has also been a rise in the proportion of which are prevented reflected in a downward trend in advice only cases. A rise in those relieved over the last two years has also been seen.

Caseload breakdown

Area	Relief Duty	Rank in England / 313	Prevention Duty	Rank in England / 313
Burnley	392	93	279	167
Chorley	**53**	**298**	**682**	**58**
Fylde	117	249	98	292
Hyndburn	70	284	169	241
Lancaster	370	103	268	172
Pendle	162	204	170	239
Preston	484	74	382	130
Ribble Valley	36	307	32	311
Rossendale	93	266	376	132
South Ribble	162	204	450	106
West Lancashire	97	258	49	307
Wyre	40	306	406	125
Lancashire- 12	2076	N/A	3361	N/A
England	118700	N/A	145020	N/A

[1]

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[1] https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/898733/homelessness.pdf

When compared with regional and national trends Chorley has a relatively low caseload of relief duty with a high caseload of prevention duty. Between April 2018 and March 2019 Chorley had 53 presentations where relief duty was owed, ranking just 298th out of 313 local authorities which reported. In the same period Chorley had 682 cases of threatened homelessness ranking 58th nationally and the highest across the 12 Lancashire district authorities. Having a caseload significantly weighted toward preventions suggests Chorley is ahead of the curve as the national onus shifts towards targeting homelessness prior to crisis point. This reinforces that the council's resources are ahead of national policy objectives. The low number of full relief duty relative to prevention duty suggests that the early intervention strategy is working with less cases reaching crisis point and requiring full relief duty.

Equalities data

When a homelessness application is completed, data on protected characteristics is also captured. The review displays this information alongside baseline data to help identify any significant differences and spot potential inequalities between certain groups. Data is captured once per application and therefore when a family application is captured such information reflects the lead applicant only.

Ethnic Group	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Census[2]
White: British	94.9%	95.4%	94.9%	93.7%	94.2%	95.1%
White: Irish	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.5%
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Any Other White Background	0.8%	0.9%	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%	1.2%
Mixed/Multiple: White & Black Caribbean	0.5%	0.4%	0.7%	0.9%	0.7%	0.4%
Mixed/Multiple: White & Black African	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%
Mixed/Multiple: White & Asian	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%
Other Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Background	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%
Asian/Asian British: Indian	0.4%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%	0.6%
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	1.0%	0.8%	0.7%	1.3%	1.4%	0.5%
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%
Any other Asian Background	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%
Other Black/African/Caribbean Background	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Other Ethnic Group: Arab	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Any Other Ethnic Group	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Don't Know/Refused	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.1%

The ethnic breakdown of homelessness presentations in Chorley shows the majority of presentations are white British accounting for between 93.7 and 95.4 percent of presentations since 2015. There have not been any major trends in the ethnicity of homelessness presentations over the period. When compared with census data the ethnicity of homeless presentations is broadly

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[2] http://www.ukcensusdata.com/chorley-e07000118#sthash.FLCq2Wa8.dpbs

representative of the local population besides 'Asian/Asian British: Pakistani' where homelessness presentations are slightly elevated with comparison to census data. This likely reflects high activity in third sector groups in the area resulting in better engagement leading to higher than baseline reporting.

Sexual Orientation	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	North West*[3]
Gay/Lesbian	7.8%	6.8%	6.9%	7.0%	7.9%	1.5%
Heterosexual/Straight	91.8%	92.5%	92.2%	92.1%	90.8%	92.3%
Other	0.3%	0.5%	0.7%	0.8%	1.2%	1%
Prefer not to say	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	5.2%

*ONS experimental stats (2017), data capture method differs (bi-sexual added to other above)

Regionally the ONS estimates 1.5% of the population identify as Gay/Lesbian, this is significantly less than those who present to the council as homeless and identify as Gay/Lesbian which was 7.9% in 2019. However, the ONS estimates also report a significantly higher proportion of refusals to answer, making statistical analysis between the two data sets difficult. Analysis is further limited by the fact that there is no specific district data (since it is not part of the census) to offer a reliable local baseline since the northwest covers multiple areas with likely variation of demographics. Although further analysis of vulnerability is difficult the higher reporting levels suggest good service engagement locally.
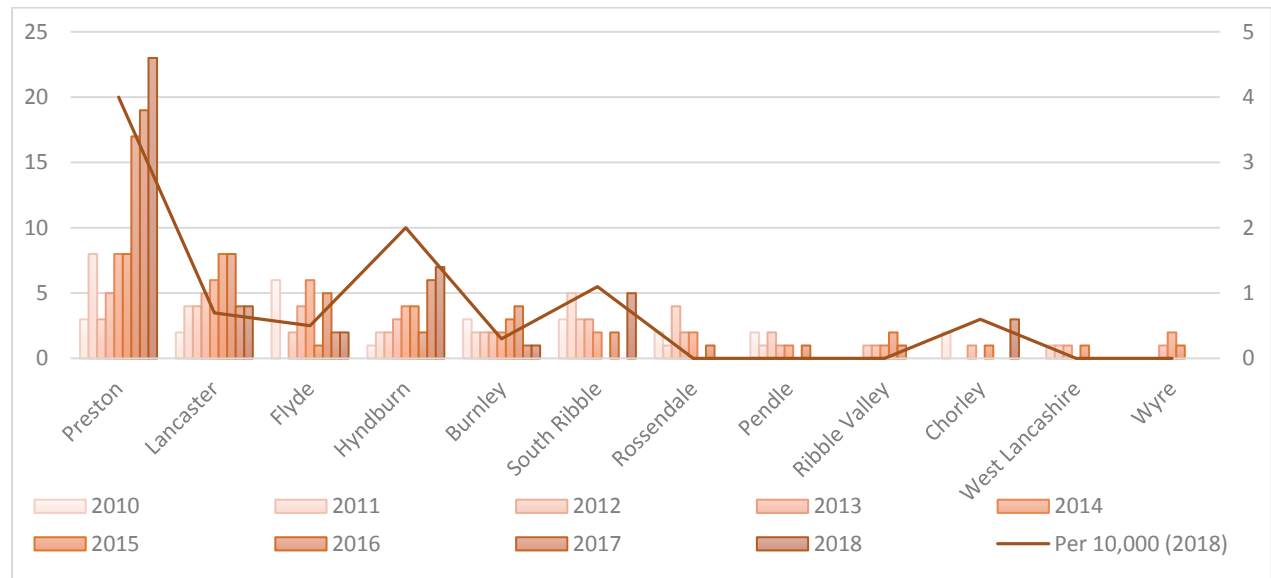
Rough sleeping in Chorley

Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness and can have significant long-term impacts to both mental and physical health. As the length of time sleeping rough increases, so does the likelihood of developing complex needs and the longer spent the greater the degree of complexity. This makes it significantly more effective and efficient to intervene at the earliest opportunity. Each year Chorley undertakes a rough sleeping count, data from the last 10 years of this count is considered below and trends compared with national, regional and local data.

Year	England	North West	Lancashire 12	Chorley
2010	1,768	100	24	2
2011	2,181	149	24	0
2012	2,309	147	24	0
2013	2,414	152	29	1
2014	2,744	189	34	0
2015	3,569	220	29	1
2016	4,134	313	41	0
2017	4,751	434	32	0
2018	4,677	428	45	3
2019	/	/	/	4
Per 10,000	2	1.4	/	0.6

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[3]https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/datasets/sexualidentityuk

The table above demonstrates that Chorley has not seen the national and regional trends of significant rises in rough sleeping. Across England rough sleeping has more than doubled in the period showing a steady year on year rise. Regionally in the North West this increase has been even more severe seeing more than four times the number of rough sleepers in 2018 than 2010. Given the small number of rough sleepers locally, all those reported are known to the council and work has been done to help where possible in each individual instance, of the four reported in 2019 two are no longer sleeping rough and efforts towards engagement with the remaining two continue.

Rough sleeping across Lancashire

From a county perspective Chorley is again among the districts with the lowest number of rough sleepers. Rough sleeping in the region shows a greater trend towards the larger urban areas than rural areas, potentially reflecting perceived begging benefits.

2.2 Likely future levels of homelessness

To gain insight into the likely future homelessness situation in Chorley the review analyses local and national data alongside relevant national policy and strategy. It uses this analysis to estimate the issues likely to be faced in the foreseeable future in order to help future strategy align resources with the type of homelessness demand.

Policy environment

Since the previous review there has been some notable changes to policy nationally with the potential to indirectly and indirectly affect the future of homelessness and rough sleeping locally.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Homelessness Reduction act has been the most significant change in homelessness legislation affecting local authorities' duties in recent times. It brought changes to statutory duties and set a direction of prevention and joint working across services. It extended the statutory prevention duty from 28 to 56 days and the need to complete a housing plan to all eligible applicants regardless of priority for both relief and prevention cases. It also reinforced joint working by setting the duty to refer for all public bodies, and as such ensures that there is cross-organisation communication when public services come across people who are currently or at risk of becoming homeless.

Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018

The Government set out a strategy in August 2018 to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it completely by 2027. It revolves around three main objectives; Prevention, Intervention and Recovery. It highlights the complex nature of rough sleeping moving from a housing approach to a cross-department one looking to understand the causes that lead to rough sleeping. Part of the rough sleeping strategy commits to having local authorities rebrand their homelessness review and strategies as homelessness and rough sleeping reviews and strategies, they now must be submitted to MHCLG and progress must be reported in action plans annually. It also announced a review of homelessness legislation expected to be released by March 2020, so there may be larger statutory changes as the result of that review.

Housing First

The government's recent election manifesto committed to expanding the housing first programme following a successful pilot across 3 regions. Further details as to the extent of the next stage of the rollout are yet to be confirmed but the scheme has been shown as effective.

EU Exit

It is hard to determine if and how the UK's exit from the EU will affect homelessness locally. Depending on the final exit terms it could impact non-UK Europeans who reside in the area, leaving uncertainty over their rights to employment, benefits and housing. Census data reports that 1,794 people or 1.7%[4] of the district population were born in non-UK Europe. Nationally statistics show a

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[4] http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E07000118

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growing trend in non-UK European homelessness currently making up 22%[5] of total rough sleepers, a steep rise from only 16% in 2017.

Tenant Fees Act 2019

In attempts to strengthen tenants' position in the private rented market the government introduced legislation banning fees outside of those it specified as allowed. This stops the long-standing industry norm of charging fees for cost of time around administration, reference checking, inventory checks and more at both the beginning and renewal points of a private rented tenancy. Such fees often amounting to costs of between £200-£300[6]. The same legislation capped the maximum deposit amount to the equivalent of 5 weeks rent (excluding properties with annual rent over £50,000). Both measures bring down the cost of starting a new tenancy and the government expects the legislation to save renters £240m a year nationally.

However, such a change in legislation also makes private rented accommodation more accessible to those with lower savings, this is likely to raise demand in the housing market. If more young people can afford to leave family living circumstances earlier then the ratio of households to total population may rise. This demand will naturally come from those who struggled to meet the financial barriers previously and so are most likely at risk of affordability issues. The churn of rental housing may also speed up as financial deterrents of switching between one private rented home and another are removed. This likely means greater demand for the local private rented stock which could see rising costs wipe out the expected short-term savings and leave those who have less financial stability to further struggle in an increasingly competitive market. The ban also includes fees for renewing tenancies thus removing the letting agents incentive to implement lease renewals. This will likely spark a rise in contracts lapsing into month to month agreements where it is possible to issue a section 21 no fault eviction notice, one of the largest reasons for homeless presentations locally - although there are plans below to revoke this as considered below.
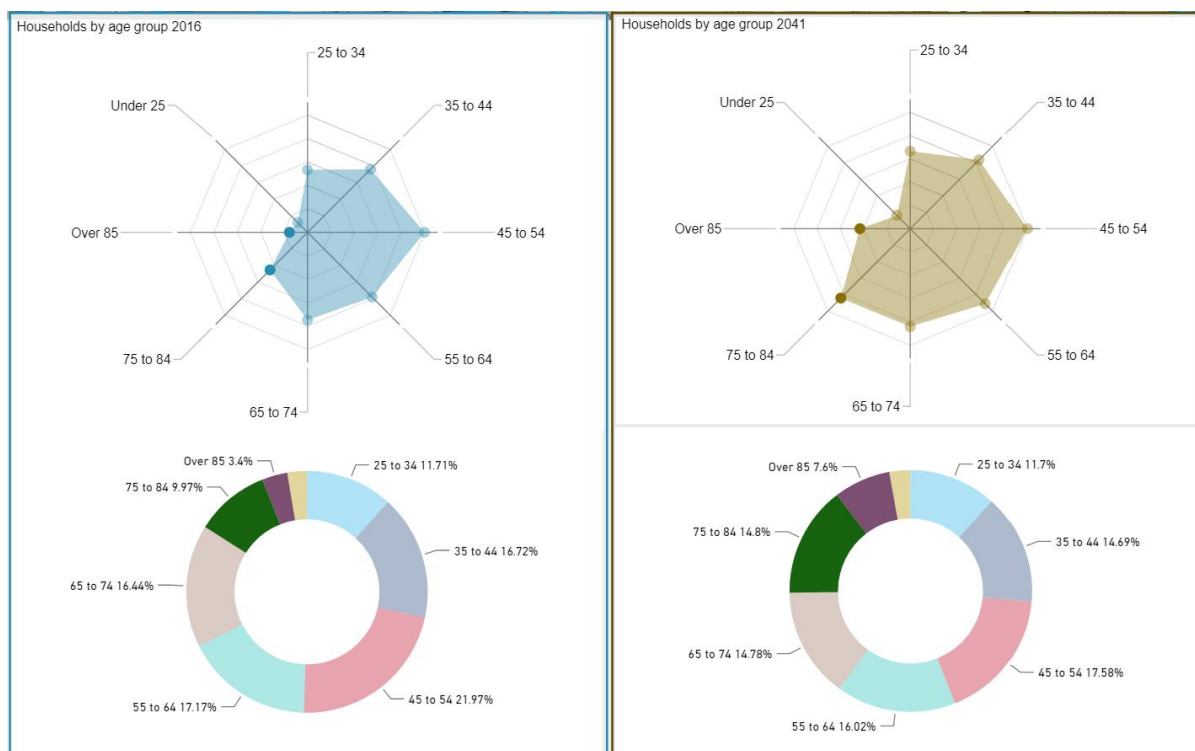
No-fault evictions ban

In a further attempt to strengthen the tenants' position the Government has set out plans to ban section 21 no-fault evictions in England. The government is going to consultation around the terms of how this is to be implemented however it appears that the intention is to strengthen repossession legislation where there is a breach of contract. Given that a significant proportion of homelessness presentations follow a section 21 being issued this could affect the situation depending upon the terms agreed by the consultation. Although such legislation aims to strengthen tenants' rights it could also deter private landlords from renting to those who have had issues in the past and put further barriers up in finding housing for those with the highest needs.

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[5] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781567/Rough_Sleeping_Statistics_2018_release.pdf
[6] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2019/4/pdfs/ukpgaen_20190004_en.pdf

Population and Demographic trends

Chorley has the highest projected population growth rate across Lancashire, predicted to grow from the current 117,812 to 133,042 by 2041[7]. The increase will be seen in the number of households which are expected to grow by 23.2% by 2041[8]. Chorley will see its population age considerably over this same period, in 2016 only 13.37% of the district's population were aged over 75, this is projected to increase substantially over the same timeframe to 23.82%.

Such demographic changes alongside total growth foreshadow significant changes in housing demand across both type and total demand over the longer term. Such demand shifts suggest that homelessness by unsuitable property may become an issue in the long term albeit only a fraction of current homelessness. A national analysis by the LGA found that the aging population will mean that demand for specialist homes for the elderly will increase by 400,000 over the next 20 years[9].

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[7] https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/population-and-households/population/population-projections/

[8] https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/population-and-households/households-and-housing/household-projections/

[9] https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/residential-revolution-needed-englands-ageing-population-says-lga

Presenting Reasons

Presenting Reasons	2015	2016	2017	2018*	2019*
Affordability	10%	12%	12%	16%	20%
Arrears (Bedroom Tax/underoccupancy)	9%	11%	3%	3%	1%
Arrears (Benefit Cap)	0%	1%	1%	2%	2%
Arrears (Budgeting Issues)	6%	8%	9%	16%	24%
Arrears (Job Loss)	7%	3%	1%	2%	2%
Arrears (Universal Credit)	0%	0%	3%	10%	29%
Arrears (Other)	17%	15%	16%	17%	24%
ASB/Criminal Behaviour Impacting on Housing	11%	8%	11%	12%	14%
Asked to Leave by Parents	9%	7%	6%	9%	11%
Asked to Leave by other Family	23%	23%	16%	27%	30%
Asked to Leave by Friends	14%	17%	20%	17%	21%
Hospital Discharge (NFA or Property unsuitable)	2%	2%	2%	3%	4%
Disrepair	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Domestic Abuse	3%	4%	4%	5%	7%
End of Private Tenancy (Notice issued)	27%	29%	31%	37%	42%
End of Social Tenancy (Notice issued)	13%	9%	11%	9%	10%
End of Supported Tenancy (Notice Issued)	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%
Evicted from Private Rented	1%	2%	3%	5%	6%
Evicted from Social Rented	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Evicted from Supported Accommodation	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%
Harassment (including Landlord harassment)	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Homeless - Sofa Surfing	8%	11%	14%	23%	28%
Homeless - Rough Sleeping	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Mental Health Issues impacting on housing	3%	7%	8%	41%	51%
Mortgage Repossession	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Overcrowding	2%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Physical Health Issues impacting on housing	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Relationship Breakdown (Non-violent)	6%	7%	11%	13%	14%
Substance Misuse Impacting on Housing	2%	3%	3%	8%	12%
Threat of repossession (Owner/Occupier)	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Under occupying	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Violence (other than D.V)	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%

*Data reporting change post April 2018(HRA) - number of reasons captured uncapped (previously 2).
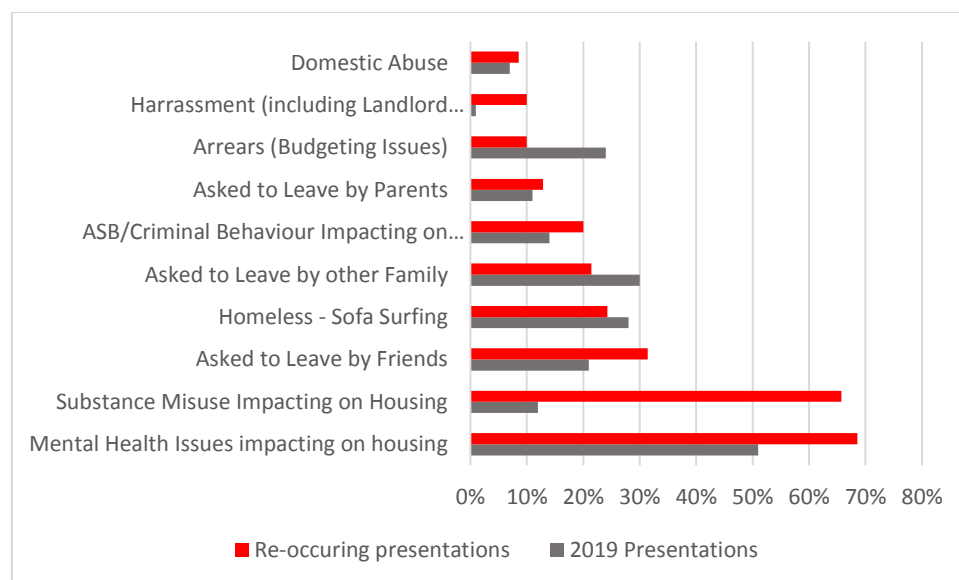
Presentation reasons show a significant total growth however this is largely due to improved data capture rather than a trend of growth across all individual presenting reasons. Specifically, from April 2018 there was a major improvement to the process with more time spent on individual applications and the removal of the two-reason limit on reporting. This has led to more in-depth information and a greater total number of reported reasons per application. As a result, data from 2018 and 2019 should be considered more accurate given the greater reporting of underlying reasons such as Mental Health and Substance Misuse. Trend analysis is limited across the change and the disproportionate impact of certain presentation reasons such as in mental health must be identified as highlighting previously hidden statistics rather than a sudden sharp rise in the issues themselves.

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The ending of private tenancies is the most significant trend accounting for the second largest factor in 2019 and a year on year rise over the whole period. Being a primary issue, the trend is also likely accurate across the data change. This contrasts with relatively stable instances of social and supported tenancy issues and suggests the private rental sector is having an increasingly disproportionate impact on homelessness by comparison and highlights that those who rent privately are at higher risk than others.

Mental health presentations account for the largest factor in recent presentations but only account for a small proportion of presentations in years prior to the HRA. This highlights that underling issues like mental health have historically hidden behind their more self-evident physical manifestations such as building up arrears or a notice being issued which were subsequently reported as the reasons by the old process.

Presenting reasons in re-occurring homelessness

The housing strategy found that 20% of homelessness cases had already used the service in the last 5 years with the most frequent reoccurring as often as every 8 months. Data from a sample of 70 re-occurring homelessness cases is shown below and mapped against the 2019 presentation reason data. The graph shows the top 10 reasons given in cases of repeat homelessness. Substance misuse impacting on housing shows a significant jump between the general homelessness presentations and re-occurring presentations going from only 12% of presentations to 66%. The other main factor in repeat homelessness is mental health which increases further from an already high 51% to 69%. This suggests that those with these issues are at high risk of repeat homelessness and that substance misuse is the biggest risk indicator of repeat homelessness in first time presentations. Another notable change is that rough sleeping is significantly more likely in reoccurring cases of homelessness going from 1% in all presentations to 4% of repeat cases.

3. Current homelessness resources

The council has a variety of resources for supporting and preventing homelessness across Chorley. These resources will be put in context alongside major presenting reasons to demonstrate how the council meets the needs of those who face homelessness across the borough.

3.1 Prevention activities

Early intervention to prevent homelessness

Early intervention is a key priority for Chorley and the council has adopted a culture of early intervention across all services who work proactively to ensure that underlying issues are identified and relevant referrals made using a multi-agency approach. The council has also set up an early intervention directorate, targeting issues upstream and aiming to resolve them before they become more complex and difficult to resolve. This directorate has a variety of different team and offers wraparound support across a broad range of issues. The Housing Solutions team is often the first point of contact in cases of homelessness and being positioned within this directorate can allow seamless support across various services and sharing of a range of support and skills.

Resources and presenting reasons

Affordability, debt and budgeting

Arrears and affordability issues are a major and rising cause of homelessness presentations locally. Rises in the costs of living have been met with pressure on incomes both from welfare with benefit changes and employment with the rise of insecure causal work. Changes brought in by universal credit have led to limited housing payments going directly to landlords. For some this is the first time needing a household budget which is reflected in the increases of arrears driven homelessness presentations. The Court and Welfare Officer is a primary resource for budgeting help and resolving issues with built up arrears. This sometimes involves making DHP applications, arranging more suitably priced housing or setting up payment arrangements to prevent homelessness and help keep existing properties. Another resource is the Citizens Advice Bureau who have a range of services to which the council can refer directly into to deal with more specific budgeting needs such as energy switching and other services.

End of Tenancy

Having good relations with social housing providers the Housing Solutions team usually get forewarning from social landlords before they begin eviction action. This enables housing officers to intervene early, finding out the causes and setting up action plans to prevent a presentation before one even occurs. This contributes to the disproportionate presentations between the social and private rented sectors since building such relations with private landlords is more difficult given their dispersed nature.

Asked to leave

When the housing solutions team are presented with an issue where someone is homeless or threatened by homelessness due to being 'asked to leave' by a friend or family the team try mediation to prevent the homelessness. Mediation is often carried out both inhouse and using the KEY youth charity who is commissioned by the council to run drop in sessions in Chorley three days

per week. Often a 'asked to leave' homelessness presentation can be prevented by mediation setting out rules and agreements which will help resolve such housing issues.

Property unsuitable

Chorley benefits from an inhouse Home Improvement Agency who adapt properties to ensure they are suitable for the occupants needs. This involves working with local contractors to ensure that adaptions are made to a good standard which will increase the longevity which a person can remain independent and how long the property itself can remain suitable to them. Adaptions such as stair lifts allow those who are disabled or elderly to remain in their existing homes for longer. This will be a key part of early intervention going forward given the projected rate at which the population is expected to age.

Domestic Abuse

In April 2018 Chorley taken over the Sanctuary Scheme for the district and has since noticed a higher level of engagement (reflected in the presentation reason raising). The scheme helps to prevent homelessness by working with the Home Improvement Agency to help survivors of domestic abuse feel safe in their existing homes by completing safety adaptions such as fireproof letterboxes and other additional security measures. This prevents victims needing to be rehoused and is often a better solution than having to move to a new unknown area at a time when existing support networks are needed most.

Preventing re-occurring homelessness

During the homelessness application repeat presentations of homelessness are flagged by the system and extra checks are put into place to ensure extra measures are taken to ensure an enhanced package of support to help customers settle into and remain in their next home. Chorley Council commissions Calico to work with private landlords to help find housing for those who have had repeat cases of homelessness. Calico include an intense support package over the first six weeks, to ensure they are supported continually through the settling process.

3.2 Resources supporting homelessness

Supporting homelessness

The main resource for supporting homelessness in Chorley where there is a statutory need is the 'Housing Solutions' team which comprises of a team leader with eight officers, some with specific roles including:

- Court and Welfare Officer
- Senior Housing Solutions Officer
- 5 x Housing Solutions Officers
- Syrian Resettlement Housing Solutions Officer

The council provides funding to a number of local support services including help the homeless who run a service locally which includes helping those with non-statutory housing needs. This service is run four days per week offering help to any adult in the Chorley area by drop-in, appointment and phone.

KEY youth charity also supports the Council in this capacity offering a range of services to those between 16-25 regardless of statutory need. They also offer pre-tenancy training which can increase young people's personal resilience to homelessness. They are a trusted referrer and able to complete some initial assessments and help set up select move in some instances.

Supporting rough sleepers

Chorley has cold weather provision which provides a place to stay overnight in poor weather conditions with the aim to prevent some of the worst aspects of rough sleeping which tend to become worse during the colder months. Although national guidance is to run this service when temperatures hit zero three nights consecutively Chorley offers this at discretion year-round if somewhere to spend the night is sought.

The council also continues to embrace the principles of no second night out which rolled out nationally in 2012. Rough sleepers that have been observed by the public are reported though Street Link. The Housing Solutions team will respond to each report and help anyone found to engage with services. This service gives members of the public the ability to connect people sleeping rough with the local authority. The council will also connect those in need with local groups in the VCSE sector such as those with foodbanks and places they can go for a warm meal.

Chorley also has a Kennel cost fund which boosts engagement of rough sleepers who can sometimes be reluctant if they have a dog since they would not be allowed into temporary accommodation with the animal. This allows for the pet to be kept at a kennel during the process and can help in some cases where otherwise rough sleepers would fail to engage with services.

3.3 Securing accommodation

Temporary accommodation

Chorley Council benefits from owning and managing Cotswold House, a 25-bed hostel only referred into by the Council's Housing Solutions team. Council operation of Cotswold allows for greater control and awareness of occupancy levels. This accommodation is used for families and single people and benefits from 24 hours a day staff. Occupancy levels at Cotswold allow Chorley to avoid the use of B&B accommodation for temporary housing, it is managed as such that there is always at least one room available immediately but often more. Many rooms are given on discretionary basis (Non-Duty below) and account for more than those owed a temporary accommodation duty. Occupancy rates have remained relatively stable since 2015 with the average stay decreasing.

Year	Duty	Non-Duty	Average Stay (days)
2015	41	113	72
2016	39	114	59
2017	42	100	61
2018	48	83	57
2019	41	78	56

Another local resource for temporary accommodation is Parker House, a complex of 8 fully furnished flats run by Places for People. This provides short term housing for young homeless people between

16 and 25, all referrals again coming from the Housing Solutions team. This is used for short term supported living to help younger people prepare for independent living in more permanent accommodation.

Social Housing

Social housing in Chorley is distributed through the Select Move system, applicants are banded based on individual need and access given to express interest with higher bands having priority. This is a choice-based system where customers choose properties they are interested in. Housing on the system is provided by various registered housing providers including Jigsaw, Places for People, Adactus Housing, Progress Housing, Accent Foundation, Community Gateway and more. Those who are homeless are banded with a priority B or C depending on individual needs, allowing for higher priority housing (the priority scale runs from A-E). The average wait times for Select Move is displayed below by bedroom need. Wait times include all bandings and higher priority applicants will generally wait for less time however due to the nature of choice-based systems average wait times are inflated by those who are more selective over the properties they express interest in.

Bedroom Need	Time (weeks)
1	16
2	15
3	32
4+	109

The highest demand is for two-bedroom properties however these are also in the greatest supply. Larger properties have the highest wait times with three beds over double that of one and two beds and four bedroom and larger being scarce. It's important to note that often registered providers will allocate their bigger houses to existing tenants who are expecting their family to grow or are already over occupied, however these instances circumvent Select Move meaning they won't show in the statistics.

4. Key findings

The homelessness situation in Chorley has been assessed by comparing current and future issues against available resources. Support, prevention and housing needs have been considered to identify gaps in service provision and key areas where strategic focus could further improve already successful services.

Mental health and substance misuse support

Mental health issues have been identified as a major factor in homelessness contributing to 51% of presentations. This increases to 69% in cases of re-occurring homelessness. Such high levels present a leverage point where focused improvement in mental health support will benefit over half of service users.

Substance misuse which only contributes to 12% of first-time presentations rises to 66% for repeat presentations. This means that reducing reoccurring homelessness can be effectively targeted by ensuring extra support for those with substance misuse issues since this is the highest indicator of repeat homelessness.

With mental health and substance misuse contributing to 69% and 66% of repeat homelessness respectively the two issues are often simultaneously present in complex reoccurring cases. It is therefore important that pathways are created with support for those with a dual diagnosis in mind.

Budgeting support

Benefit system changes introduced by Universal Credit have increased the need for budgeting skills by limiting instances where housing payment is made directly to landlords. This change has been reflected by a significant increase in budgeting related homelessness presentations.

The council has resources to support budgeting issues when they are identified by the housing solutions team and data suggests that these are effective with budgeting issues dropping from 24% in first time presentations to 10% of repeat presentations and arrears caused by Universal Credit from 29% to 1%. However, this support is offered at the point of homelessness presentation when arrears have already built up, so the effectiveness of this support has the potential to improve greatly with effective early intervention and preventative measures.

Housing stock imbalances

The review identified that population size and household numbers are growing at the fastest rate in Lancashire. Simultaneously the population is aging with the over 75 demographic set to grow from 13% to 24%. Social housing also was identified to have less provision for larger families with 3 bedroom housing having over double the wait time of 1 and 2 bedroom housing and further 4+ bedroom social housing was scarcely available via the select move system.

Strengthening support for those in the private rental sector

Homelessness presentation data shows that the private rental sector contributes to over four times more instances of homelessness than social rented. Strengthening tenants' rights has been shown to be high on the national policy agenda with several legislative changes planned and some recent implementations. Councils have had limited ability to influence the private sector, but recent and upcoming legislation may improve this, however this depends upon residents being aware of their rights and responsibilities.