



Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Annual Report 2021/22

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide information around the response and prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping by Worcester City Council's Housing and Homelessness services in the financial year 2021/22. In addition, the report sets out the planned activities and direction of resources by the service over the forthcoming year (2022/23).

Background

The service has not previously provided an annual report of its activities and there is no statutory requirement of the authority to produce one. It is recognised however that producing an annual report provides transparency around activity undertaken in respect of homelessness and rough sleeping and indicates where the authority intends to focus its resources moving forwards.

Service demand

The 2021/22 financial year was not an 'ordinary' year with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic remaining as a key influence and therefore the figures and statistics within this report should be considered in this context and may not provide a natural baseline position.

During the year, the service received 1,871 homelessness approaches which resulted in 736 homeless applications being taken. The reason for the difference between the number of approaches and applications taken relates to customers failing to attend their first appointment / make contact (1,135 cases) and other households being provided with housing advice as they were not apparently threatened with homelessness.

Acceptance of a prevention or relief duty

Following the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, two new duties were added in legislation, and Authorities were legally obliged to carry out these duties in each case where a person was considered to be homeless, or threatened with homelessness (likely they may have to leave their home within 56 days of their approach).

Under this new way of working, if a threat of homelessness was established a prevention duty would be accepted. If the person was already homeless, a relief duty would be accepted.

Prevention and relief duties are accepted irrelevant of priority need, intentionality, or local connection.

In the year 2021/22, we accepted prevention and relief duties as detailed below;

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Prevention	373	291	337
Relief	502	432	490

End of Prevention and Relief

Of the Prevention cases that were closed, they were closed for the following reasons:-

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Prevention end reasons			
Accepted an offer of accommodation that is likely to last for 6 months or more	201	201	143
Became homeless	108	58	63
56 days elapsed and no further action / loss of contact	59	28	45
Refused a suitable offer of accommodation (family / friends / supported)	2	2	2
Deliberately refused to co-operate	1	1	1
Customer ceased to be eligible for assistance)	2	1	0

This identifies that although there is success in accessing permanent rehousing, there remains a significant number of individuals where homelessness is unable to be prevented which leads to them becoming homeless. One of the key prohibiting factors to being unable to prevent homelessness is the availability and accessibility of suitable, affordable housing solutions available in a timely manner. Opportunities to intervene and prevent homelessness remains a key priority for the service.

Of the relief cases that were closed, they were closed for the following reasons:-

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Relief end reasons			
Accepted an offer of accommodation that is likely to last for 6 months or more	209	214	173
56 days elapsed and final decision made	205	132	124

56 days elapsed and no further action / loss of contact	79	80	71
Refused a suitable offer of accommodation (family / friends / supported)	6	6	4
Refused a final offer of accommodation (social / private tenancy)	5	3	4
Customer ceased to be eligible for assistance	0	1	2

Of the cases that were not successfully prevented or relieved and went onto a main decision to be made, the decisions are outlined below

Decision	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Full Duty	140	90	90
Not in priority need	49	34	35
Not homeless	14	13	11
Ineligible	4	8	8
Intentional	16	8	5
No local connection	8	5	5
Total decisions	231	158	154

The number and spread of homeless decisions has remained consistent over the past two years with the number of full duty acceptances significantly lower than pre pandemic.

Of those accepted a main housing duty, duty was discharged for the following reasons

Main duty discharged	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Accepted an offer of accommodation	114	77	55
Refused an offer of accommodation	1	2	1
Homeless intentionally from temporary accommodation	7	5	0
Became ineligible	1	2	0
Application withdrawn / loss of contact	17	4	7
Total decisions	140	90	63

Demographics of approaches

Approaches by age

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
16-17	58	53	58
18-20	193	179	201
21-24	220	258	251
25-29	266	233	309
30-44	530	569	689
45-59	281	244	268
60-64	30	34	41
65-74	31	30	38
74+	17	13	16
Total	1626	1613	1871

Approaches by gender

	Male	Female	Transgender	Couple	Other (multiple adults)	Not known	Total
2019/20	772	646	1	178	26	3	1626
2020/21	771	651	4	161	24	2	1613
2021/22	834	804	8	188	31	6	1871

Approaches by household type

	Households with dependent children / pregnant household member	Households without dependent children	Total
2019/20	384	1242	1626
2020/21	357	1256	1613
2021/22	467	1404	1871

Social Housing Supply and Demand

The demand for social and affordable housing options remains high within the City and far exceeds the availability and supply of accommodation. The provision and delivery of new social and affordable housing within the City has fallen beneath the required levels for a number of years and is a key priority for the Council to enable increased provision.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Total number of applicants on housing waiting list at year end	N/A	N/A	2574
Number of housing applications received	N/A	1622 (From September from September 2020)	1596
Number of nominations/ lets to social housing	N/A	50 (from September 2020)	439

Please note Worcester City switched its housing register from Home Choice Plus to Housing for you in September 2020. As such figures for 2020/21 are incomplete and figures for 2019/20 are not available. The number of applicants on the housing register as at 27th June 2022 stood at 2,778.

Supply 2021/22

Property type	Bedrooms					Grand Total
	0	1	2	3	4	
Bungalow	-	2	5	-	-	7
Flat	-	194	120	-	-	314
Hostel	-	-	1	-	-	1
House	-	2	56	67	2	127
Maisonette	-	7	7	5	-	19
Semi-detached	-	-	-	5	-	5
Studio flat	17	-	-	-	-	17
Grand Total	17	205	189	77	2	490

Demand 2021/22

Bedroom need	Pregnant		Grand Total
	No	Yes	
1	1205	21	1226
2	737	90	827
3	362	29	391
4	104	4	108
5	8	3	11
6	3		3
Grand Total	2419	147	2566

The tables above highlights the makeup of housing need and the size property that is required by applicants on the housing register. Although the greatest demand for housing is those with a 1 bedroom need, there are significantly fewer larger properties allocated with a current demand for 4 bed+ properties being 115 with only 2 four bedroom houses being let in 2021/22.

The main provider of social housing in Worcester is Platform Housing Group who have a stock of approximately 5,400 properties in the City. A breakdown of the providers and the number of properties that they have in the City is outlined in the table below.

Registered Provider Total % Stock	Total Number	%
Platform	5412	67.6%
Citizen	1540	19.2%
Sanctuary	385	4.8%
Bromford	252	3.2%

Rooftop	167	2.1%
Muir	43	<1%
Worcester Municipal Charities	42	<1%
Orbit	41	<1%
Walsall Housing Group	24	<1%
Anchor Hanover	32	<1%
Worcestershire YMCA	14	<1%
Worcester City Council (TA)	12	<1%
Stonewater	12	<1%
Haig Homes	12	<1%
Worcs County Council	10	<1%
Heylo	6	<1%
Clarion Housing (was Circle)	2	<1%
Tolladine Mission (CIO)	1	<1%
Total	8007	

Breakdown of lets by provider

2021/22	Lets
Worcester: Platform	302
Worcester: Citizen	65
Other	60
Worcester: Sanctuary Housing Group	44
Worcester: Bromford	8
Worcester: Stonewater Housing Group	8
Worcester: Rooftop	2
Worcester: Walsall Housing Group	1
Grand Total	490

In addition to the existing provision, the housing enabling service seeks to maximise the number of new affordable properties built within the City. This remains a challenge with limited land availability, a lack of Council owned land and financial viability of developing known sites a challenge for Registered Providers.

Temporary accommodation

Keeping the numbers of households in temporary accommodation low is a key priority for the service recognising the instability and impact that this can have on individuals and families. Where we are unable to prevent homelessness and have to result in accessing temporary accommodation, we seek to minimise the length of stay and only use Bed & Breakfast accommodation as a last resort.

The Council directly manages 12 units of temporary accommodation including 4 self contained houses at Oldbury Road and 8 rooms at Bromyard Road. In addition, the Council is able to nominate to Phoenix Court which offers 22 self contained flats managed by Platform Housing Group. Beyond this, the Council is reliant on bed and breakfast/ guest house accommodation

The following table highlights the number of households in temporary accommodation on the last day of each quarter (the counting night).

Households in Temporary accommodation	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Q1	56	64	56
Q2	58	59	55
Q3	54	53	65*
Q4	63	62	68*

*H-CLik information for these periods have not yet been submitted

The following table highlights the number of nights spent in B & B accommodation by households with children. Wherever possible, we seek to avoid the use of B & B accommodation for households with children but sometimes is necessary where alternative provision is not available or in an emergency and until alternative accommodation can be accessed. We are seeking to increase to the number of temporary accommodation units to further reduce the necessity to use B & B accommodation.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of nights spent in B & B accommodation by households with children	58	20	44

The use of temporary accommodation by Worcester City Council remains broadly comparable to similar Cities of a similar makeup to Worcester. It remains a key priority for the Council to ensure the most efficient use of temporary accommodation, to minimise the use of B & B/ Guest House provision and it is an intention to consider how we can reduce its use and explore opportunities to increase the direct access and minimise the use of B & B/ Guest House provision.

Causes of homelessness

In order for us to tailor and target resources effectively, it is important for us to understand the reasons leading to people's homelessness. The table below highlights the main reasons for homeless amongst a selection of other causes

Cause	Number
Family no longer willing or able to accommodate	300
End of private rented tenancy – assured shorthold tenancy	194
Domestic abuse – victim	167
Relationship with partner ended (non-violent breakdown)	140
Other	132
Friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	78
Departure from institution: Custody	72
Eviction from supported housing	65
Non-racially motivated / other motivated violence or harassment	44
End of social rented tenancy	41
End of private rented tenancy – not assured shorthold tenancy	20
Home no longer suitable due to disability / ill health	12
Racially motivated violence or harassment	6
Domestic abuse – alleged perpetrator excluded from property	5
Property disrepair	5
Fire or flood / other emergency	4
Departure from institution: Hospital (general)	3
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support	2
Mortgage repossession	1

The largest cause of homelessness is breakdown of relationships between friends and family. This will reflect young people who have never had their own place to live, and it will also represent those who have become homeless or left their accommodation to stay with friends or family and then approached ourselves.

End of privately rented tenancies is the next highest reason for homelessness. This has decreased over the years when it was the highest reason for homelessness. However following the mortarium of evictions from the pandemic, the proportion of applicants approaching as a result of their tenancy ending has reduced. Though with cost of living increases and inflation underway, as well as the potential for rising interest rates increasing mortgage repayments and rent, this has the potential for change.

Domestic abuse is the third highest reason for homelessness. This is in line with previous years. To address this Worcester City has employed specialist domestic abuse workers to work on addressing the additional needs of individuals fleeing domestic abuse.

Non violent breakdowns of relationships is also a high cause of homelessness, particularly affecting single males whom are older. Such individuals are resistance to consider accommodation options such as HMO's and hostels due to difficulties in child access and wanting to avoid other individuals with complex needs.

Prison discharges also reflects a high amount of approaches. Such individuals have multiple complex needs and are difficult to engage with. Although we receive referrals from prison and probation our ability to undertake work with those in custody prior to release is difficult as there are insufficient access pathways to liaise with households in custody before release.

Housing First

Housing First is operated by St Pauls. They work with households who are homeless, rough sleeping or threatened with rough sleeping and are multiply excluded with a high level of needs.

Ten households have been secured long term accommodation by housing first and support is continuing to take place to help them sustain. None of the households accommodated through housing first have had a failed tenancy. This is despite households with a high complexity of need with a history of evictions. This has been due to continual involvement and support provided by the Housing First Team to enable households to sustain their accommodation and offer assurances to landlords that any issues are being addressed.

No Second Night Out (NSNO)

NSNO is operated by Caring for Communities and People (CCP). It offers emergency accommodation to households that would not otherwise be owed an accommodation duty by the council.

It aims to prevent individuals becoming intense rough sleepers. This is done with accommodation for 28 days with intensive work to secure more long term accommodation.

In Q2 and Q3 of 2021/22, 20 households were prevented from rough sleeping and secured accommodation through NSNO.

Worcester City Council operates a longer period of emergency accommodation compared to surrounding districts, 28 days compared to less than a week. This has been valuable as it has allowed more time to secure housing options and ensure people new to the street do not continue to rough sleep.

Rough sleeping

Rough sleeping is the most visible side of homelessness and forms a significant part of public perception of homelessness and can present the most risk to individuals. Worcester City are committed to reducing rough sleeping and where possible eliminating it from occurring however recognise the challenges of achieving this and the importance of working with other agencies and providers within the City.

Each year, all Local Authorities are required to provide the number of individuals sleeping rough on a single night each year between 1st October and 30th November either through a physical count or estimate. There are a range of factors that may affect the number of people who sleep rough on any given night such as the availability of night shelters, the weather, where people choose to sleep and the date and time chosen for the snapshot estimate.

In Worcester, the snapshot related to an evidence based estimate of the number of people rough sleeping in Worcester on 4th November 2021. The estimate was undertaken with partners from across the City which identified 20 individuals as sleeping rough, up from 12 in 2020 and 19 in 2019.

Worcester has had a relatively consistent number of between 4-6 well known and entrenched rough sleepers who have ongoing outreach support and engagement with the homelessness service and partner organisations in the City.

Beyond the entrenched rough sleepers, numbers of rough sleepers in Worcester fluctuate and are susceptible to influxes from external factors. Numbers of rough sleepers had not reached 20 prior to or post the estimate as evidenced through the weekly counts but spiked largely due to an influx in people from out of area.

Individuals from outside of the area are attracted into the City Centre as a safe environment with a number of established services and provisions in place which neighbouring authorities do not have. Individuals from out of area typically do not remain in the City for any length of time and are not the same people repeatedly returning to Worcester making engagement and prevention a challenge.

From the 20 individuals, 5 were known entrenched rough sleepers who have received numerous offers of accommodation, 2 had a current tenancy but occasionally chose to sleep rough and were on the night of the count and 8 were from out of the area (3 from Blackburn, 3 from Birmingham, 1 from Wyre Forest and 1 from Wychavon). The remaining 5 were individuals that had been in and out of accommodation but had challenging behaviours and adverse histories, including 1 prison leaver, making placements challenging.

The homelessness service balances its approach to rough sleeping between prevention and intervention coordinating the City's response through fortnightly rough sleeper meetings and has dedicated rough sleeper housing solutions officers as well as outreach officers supporting individuals in temporary accommodation.

Access into the service comes from agency referrals, street link and self referral. Pathways into accommodation are considered on individual need and include private rented, registered providers, supported housing with immediate provision for anybody new to rough sleeping through No Second Night Out (NSNO).

There are a range of services including the CCP project which provides floating support and facilitates the Sever Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) & NSNO provision, Night Stop and Mediation Service, debt advice through the CAB, Housing First, an intervention and transition service, rough sleeper coordinator and dedicated rough sleeper housing solutions officers.

In addition, there is an established approach to joint working between agencies with regular meetings held to collaborate on rough sleepers as well as a strong volunteer response through Worcester Cares.

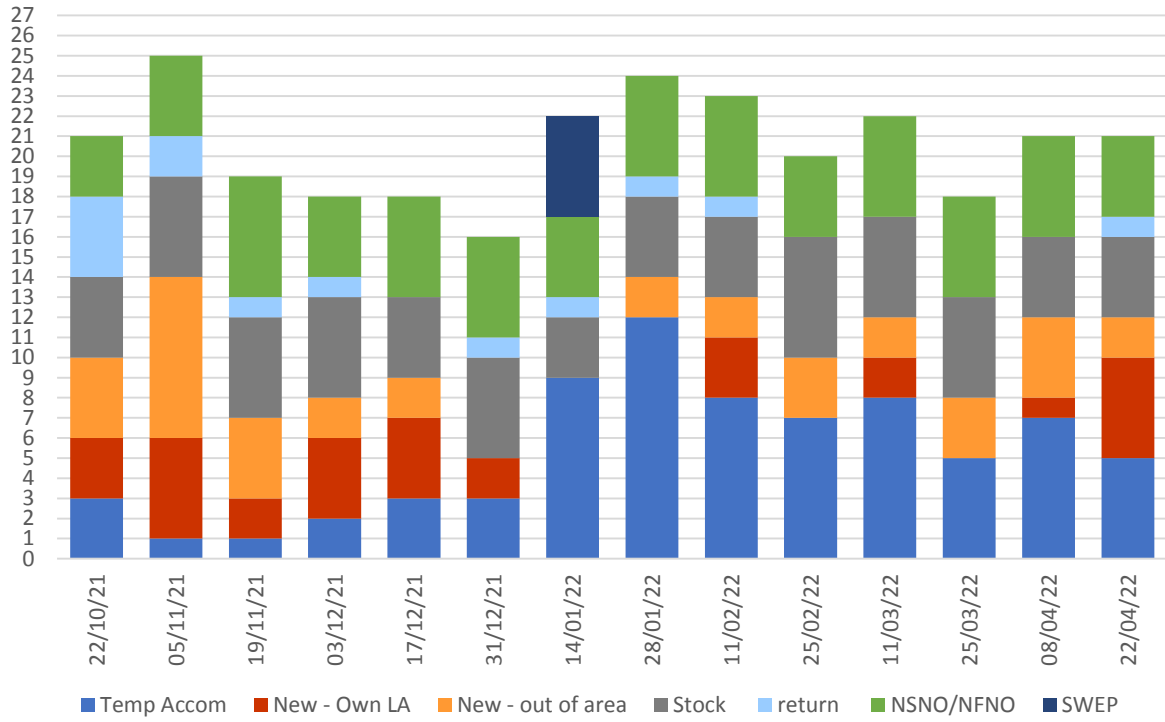
The factors that prohibit rough sleepers accommodation are varied, requiring an individual approach for each rough sleeper. For some they are multiple excluded due to prior bad behaviour and landlords are unwilling to accept them. The reasons for multiple exclusions can stem from drug and alcohol misuse, behavioural problems, trauma, loneliness leading to anti social associates being allowed entry and mental health.

Some individuals whom are not multiply excluded have a distrust of services and an unwillingness to engage or accept offers of accommodation, stemming from undiagnosed mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, paranoia and a lack of self esteem and concerns regarding capacity.

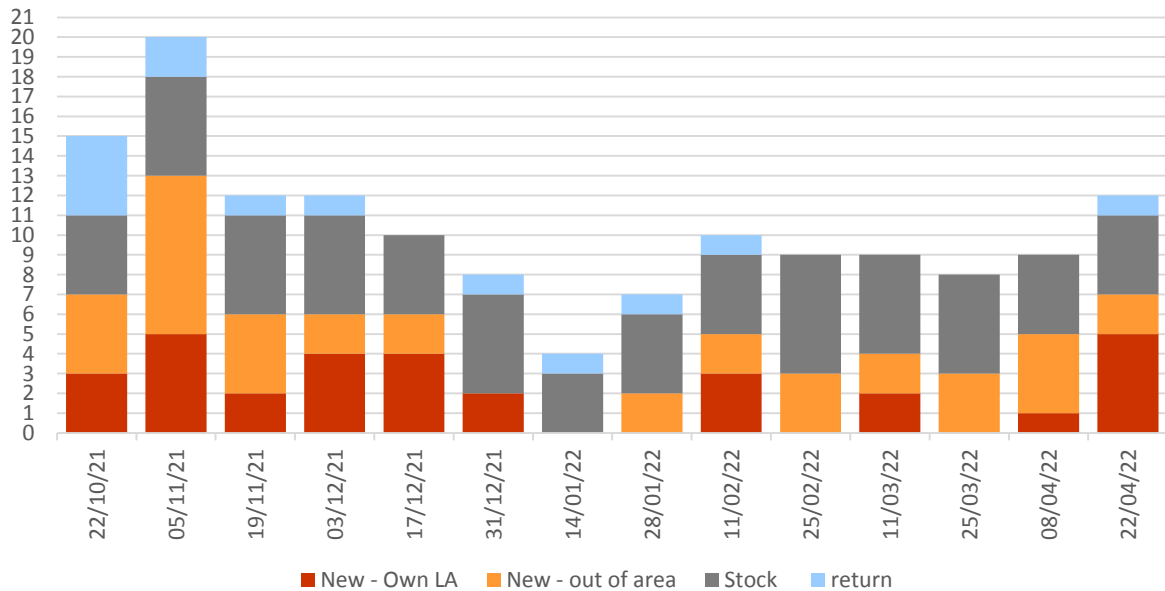
Other individuals are willing to engage, but struggle to sustain the type of accommodation available, such as shared accommodation or supported accommodation. Individuals have a preference towards their own front door they can lock. Such accommodation for individuals with low income and poor or non existent tenancy history and a higher level of support needs are limited.

The following tables outlines the numbers of individuals who would be rough sleeping without intervention through temporary accommodation or NSNO and also those known to be sleeping rough broken down by whether they are stock/ entrenched rough sleepers, from out of area, have returned to rough sleeping and those from within the City but new to rough sleeping.

Worcester - Rough Sleepers (all)



Worcester - Rough Sleepers on the Street



Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

During the winter of 2021/22 the emergency accommodation was opened 30 times. During this time the Worcester accommodation was accessed by 45 individuals, of which 35 people had a connection to Worcester. The number of times the accommodation was accessed by an individual ranged between 1 night and 9 nights. SWEP is also triggered in severe hot weather 'hot SWEP' whereby outreach officers and partners will engage with anybody who is sleeping rough to offer water, hats, sun cream and accommodation where required.

Protect and Vaccinate

On 20th December 2021, the government announced funding to provide emergency accommodation and support to increase vaccinate rates for individuals who were homeless and rough sleeping. The scheme was in operation until 31st March 2022 during which time, 5 were accommodated.

We were able to successfully engage with a number of individuals who had previously not been willing to access offers of support or accommodation and to develop personal housing plans to support them in to alternative accommodation. Of the 22 accommodated through this scheme, 9 were assisted directly into accommodation with 3 still being accommodated pending their property being available for them to move into, 2 still accommodated and working with their housing officer, 3 have moved on to other areas, 3 staying with family / friends and one returned to prison.

Everyone In

During the height of the Pandemic the Government announced everyone in to bring in everyone on the streets. This was operated twice in March and November 2020. Worcester City Council went beyond what the government requested and continued to accommodate rough sleepers at the Fownes Hotel, even after the guidance was rescinded.

Of the 172 accommodated, 115 were secured accommodation.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse features as a high cause of homelessness and an important part of the homeless teams work. Through the Domestic Abuse New Burdens funding, the team have two Domestic Abuse Housing Solutions Officers who are specifically trained and focussed towards responding to and supporting individuals presenting as homelessness where the primary cause is domestic abuse.

All Housing Solutions Officers have training around Domestic Abuse and we work closely with providers including West Mercia Women's Aid and Worcester Community Trust who run the 'DAWN' project. We attend the Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) as well as working closely with partners in relation to perpetrators of Domestic Abuse.

There is an established Sanctuary scheme which provides grants to provide additional safety and security to support survivors of domestic abuse to remain in their home and prevent their homelessness. We recognise that this is not always appropriate and that moving sometimes is the only safe option. The Domestic Abuse Act provided additional responsibilities on Local Authorities including the provision of safe accommodation.

A needs assessment was undertaken across Worcestershire which identified the need for an additional 8 units of safe accommodation within the City. We are using existing delegated authority to progress the procurement of accommodation to meet this important need. This will be facilitated through a lease arrangement with a Registered Provider on a cost neutral business model.

Funding

The following table highlights the grant funding that the Council was awarded during the year 2021/22 which related to homelessness. The funding arrangements around homelessness have been challenging due to their short term nature, restrictive grant conditions as well as short timescales for expenditure.

	Grant
Homelessness Prevention Grant	464,362.00
Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme	11,250.00
Protect & Vaccinate	173,582.00
Preventing homelessness	97,366.00
MEES	8,443.00
County Business Rates Retention-Housing First	178,666.00
Rough Sleeper Initiative 3 extension	236,240.00
Rough Sleeper Initiative 3 top up	100,000.00
Rough Sleeper Initiative 4	789,849.00
DV -County	39,500.00
DV -MHCLG (New Burdens)	32,916.00
Summer grants	25,236.00
Household funding-DWAS	50,000.00
Household funding-Spend to save	25,000.00
RSI5 submitted not awarded	
COMF-Mental Health	20,000.00
COMF- Accomodation	25,000.00
COMF Food	5,000.00
COMF Security/Support	11,564.00
COMF-Covid Accommodation	14,460.00
Total	2,308,434.00

It is anticipated that grant funding will be greatly reduced in 2022/23 with primary funding coming from the Rough Sleeper Initiative 2022-2025 which is due to be announced and the Homelessness Prevention Grant. The Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2022/23 is £474,097 and is proposed to be allocated as outlined in the table below:

Brought forward from 21/22	1,049,913
Homeless Prevention Grant 22/23	- 474,097
Support workers x 4 +0.5 FTE	148,185
Outstanding cost to cover Young Persons Housing Solutions Officer role	5,000
Housing Solutions Officer (Domestic Abuse) to 31/3/23	32,910
Customer/Business Support Officer for Temporary Accommodation	30,000
Accommodation Officer(proposed from 1/10/22- not yet recruited)	16,465
Tenancy Sustainment Officer (proposed from 1/10/22- not yet recruited)	16,465
Pre tenancy training officer 18.5 hrs (proposed from 1/10/22- not yet recruited)	8,233
Additional Generic Housing Solutions Officer	30,000
Contribution to Worcester City Lettings Post	12,854
Fixed Term Property Std Post/City Lettings (proposed from 1/10/22- not yet recruited)	22,160
Property Standards Officer Post	31,658
System Support costs	6,140
Housing Solutions staffing costs	350,000
DV Coordinator-County wide post	4,375
HOPEs contract-extension	51,605
CCP-Park Street	48,246
SWEP Cold Weather Fund	40,000
Worcester City Lettings support costs	2,000
Total allocation for 2022/23	856,296
Carry forward to 23/24	667,714

Health, Wellbeing & Housing

We recognise that housing plays an integral and fundamental contribution to the health and wellbeing of the residents of Worcester. The homeless service takes a prevention focussed approach and recognises the physical and mental health impacts that unstable, poor quality housing can play as well as the risk of homelessness.

The private rented sector is an important housing option for many people and there is an established private rented market in Worcester. The Private Sector Housing team are integral in having oversight of the condition of the private sector housing stock within the city both proactively identifying poor quality housing i.e. identifying housing which does not meet the minimum levels of energy performance as well as investigating reports of complaints. The team will always seek to find a resolution and has a range of tools and powers to do so and enforce non compliance.

One of the current and emerging challenges facing many across society are the rising costs of living placing increasing numbers of households into financial hardship. This poses a risk to their health and wellbeing as well as an increased risk in the rise of homelessness as individuals and families face challenging decisions around their finances.

The household support fund has been utilised to support households through a range of measures including financial support to access housing and through the Discretionary Welfare Assistance Scheme.

We recognise that the cost of living crisis plays a significant risk to increasing levels of homelessness and therefore will be seeking to coordinate a City wide partnership collaboration to consider the impact, map service provision in order to intervene, signpost and direct people to support, to remove barriers to accessing services, particularly where risk to health, wellbeing and homelessness exist and also to identify gaps in service provision.

A District Collaborative is being developed and will be a key partnership in working together to tackle health inequalities across the City.

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There is an established Sanctuary scheme which provides grants to provide additional safety and security to support survivors of domestic abuse to remain in their home and prevent their homelessness. We recognise that this is not always appropriate and that moving sometimes is the only safe option. The Domestic Abuse Act provided additional responsibilities on Local Authorities including the provision of safe accommodation. A needs assessment was undertaken across Worcestershire which identified the need for an additional 8 units of safe accommodation within the City. We are currently progressing the procurement of accommodation to meet this important need.

Looking ahead

Prevention remains a key priority for the homelessness service and we recognise the value in preventing people from being put at risk and facing homelessness therefore continued focus will be given to a prevention. Unfortunately, despite efforts to prevent homelessness, it is not always possible and our approach will focus on swift and supportive intervention to support people back into stable, safe and secure accommodation as quickly as possible.

We recognise that some individuals face homelessness on multiple occasions and that some individuals are more at risk of tenancy failure. Therefore will be exploring opportunities to provide greater support, advice and intervention at pre tenancy stage, particularly for those who have had tenancy failure or have not had a tenancy previously to increase the likelihood of successful and sustainable tenancies.

The past few years have presented both challenges and opportunities in relation to the prevention and response to homelessness in the City. Although the government has provided funding opportunities around homelessness and rough sleeping, this has been short term and often with prescriptive grant conditions and short timescales for expenditure.

Worcester does have higher numbers of individuals sleeping rough than other Worcestershire Districts including a small number of entrenched rough sleepers. Worcester alongside the other Worcestershire Districts have submitted an application for funding through Round 5 of the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI5) which provides funding for 3 years, the first time this funding has been available beyond a 1 year basis.

Although awards have yet to be announced, the Council is seeking to further develop its approach to delivering individual, bespoke and innovative options and solutions to address rough sleeping in the City. Examples include funding a detox programme with move on arrangements into accommodation, the use of pod accommodation and the support and facilitation of therapeutic, meaningful activities.

We need to balance a strategic approach to the prevention and response of homelessness but ensure that we maintain the focus of individuals throughout service delivery.

Maximisation of housing options remains a key priority including both affordable housing as well as good quality private rented accommodation. We recognise the importance of working in partnership and collaboration with others in order to prevent and respond to homelessness strategically and that Registered Providers play a key role in doing so. We will be establishing a Worcester Housing Partnership to engage with Registered Providers with stock in the City to discuss housing allocations, homelessness and development opportunities. In addition, we will be seeking to engage with Registered Providers individually to discuss opportunities for maximising affordable housing options in the City and offering the support of the Council to assist in an enabling role.

The Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy is in the process of being revised with a consultation event taking place in June 2022 to include the views and experiences of professionals from across the County. The Strategy is due to go live at the end of 2022 and will include a Worcester City Council specific action plan to set out how the aims and focus of the strategy will be delivered.