

Help and Support Needs

The majority of people are able to find and keep a home of their own. However there are still a significant number of people who require some form of help and support, either to access a home in the first place, or to enable them to continue to live there for as long as they wish. This may be through the provision of personal support services or aids and adaptations within a general needs home or through some form of supported housing.

Homelessness

We have a range of powers and duties to advise and assist homeless people including a duty to have a strategy for tackling homelessness in the district which we are incorporating into the new strategy from 2017.

Most homeless people and families will be on the housing register discussed earlier and will be banded according to the duty owed to them by the council but it's important to consider a wider range of information for the purpose of formulating the homelessness aspect of the strategy. This has been compiled and used to carry out a review of homelessness and to form the basis for consultation around homelessness issues. The full review is included as appendix 2 but the principal statistics and key points are highlighted below.

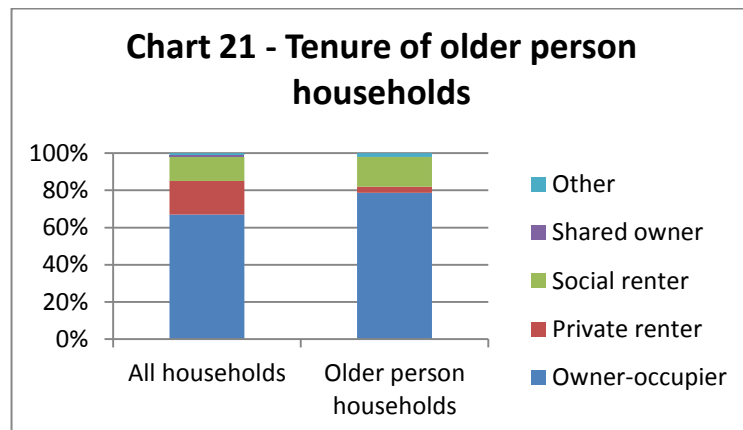
Table 12 – Key homelessness statistics 2010 - 2016				
Year	Homelessness cases dealt with	Full duty accepted	In temporary accommodation at year-end	Homelessness prevented
2010/11	639	109	14	269
2011/12	489	123	12	144
2012/13	643	174	16	108
2013/14	708	129	14	136
2014/15	575	142	16	58
2015/16	705	172	13	71

- There have been big increases locally in both the numbers of homelessness applications received and the numbers accepted by the council. Both rose by a higher proportion than was the case nationally.
- The numbers accommodated in temporary accommodation at the year-end rose more slowly locally than nationally and the overall numbers per 1,000 households were well below the national average.
- Warwick District Council makes more use of local authority/housing association accommodation for temporary accommodation than is the case across England.
- Official rough sleeper counts show a significant increase in the district in 2015. Longer term, since 2010 the increase has been below the national increase.
- The main reasons for homelessness are "termination of an assured shorthold tenancy" and "parents no longer willing or able to accommodate". These were also the two most common causes in 2010 albeit in reverse order.
- A downward trend in those becoming homeless as a result of "violent relationship breakdown involving partner" between 2010 and 2014 has unfortunately reversed over the last two years but is still slightly below the level six years ago.
- The main priority need is overwhelmingly the presence of children or an expected child in the household. Physical disability cases increased each year to 2014 but fell back in the two years since, to 3%. Conversely mental illness fell from 9% to 1% by 2013/14 but has risen again now to 5%.
- The number of cases where homelessness was either prevented or relieved has declined significantly since 2010/11.
- The ethnicity profile of accepted homeless cases differs in some respects from the district profile with fewer white households and more who describe their ethnic origin as "other" or "not stated".
- Ministry of Justice figures on repossession actions show that social landlord actions have increased the most over the past six years. Private landlord actions have reduced albeit partly offset by more use of the accelerated landlord process. Mortgage actions have reduced the most of any tenure.

Older people

At 28% in 2011 Warwick has the smallest proportion of population aged 55 or more in the housing market area. This is projected to increase by 37.6% by 2031.

As regards the current tenure of older person households chart 21 shows the breakdown compared to the district as a whole.



There are many more owner-occupiers and slightly more living in social rented homes than is the case district-wide. Only a very small proportion (3.3%) rent privately.

Under-occupancy is very common among older households in the district with 57.5% having at least two spare bedrooms and a further 28.5% having one. Overcrowding is negligible at 0.1%.

An increase in the population of older people brings with it an increase in the number and percentage of people with dementia and mobility problems. Looking out to 2031 the increases are projected to be 81.1% for dementia and 66.3% for mobility.

Health and disability

Across the whole district population 14.8% of people are estimated to have a long-term health problem or disability (LTHPD) and 22% of households are estimated to include someone with LTHPD.

As at 2011 WDC had 3,429 mental health service users. As a rate per 1,000 adult population this was the highest in the county but this is no doubt influenced by the presence in the district of a mental health hospital/unit with 33 places in the district. Only Nuneaton and Bedworth also has such a facility and that has only six units.

Within Warwickshire, approximately 275 Warwickshire County Council customers with learning disabilities and 36 customers with physical disabilities are currently living in residential care, and in order to provide an alternative, the county council has a programme in place to deliver housing with care units that are suitable for adults with disabilities, i.e. there is a move away from commissioning additional residential care. In addition, several customers currently living within the family home environment, e.g. those making the transition from children to adult services, could also benefit from supported living accommodation as an alternative to a residential care placement. This includes customers with elderly carers who are finding it increasingly hard to cope and who could therefore share and have their individual needs met within a supported living environment.

In terms of local need or anticipated demand, in 2014/15 there were 261 customers with learning disabilities living in the community across the Warwick district, with a further 29 customers living in residential care. There were also 139 customers with physical disabilities and/or sensory impairment living in the community across the district, and a further 13 customers living in residential care.

The JSHMA assesses the need for extra-care housing to meet the demand arising from these growth trends and finds a need for 122 new homes per year in Warwick district of which 30 need to be affordable. These are included in the figures for overall housing need set out earlier, not additional to them.

Teenage pregnancy

In 2013 there were 42 conceptions by females under the age of 18 in the Warwick district. Half of these led to an abortion and half to a live birth. As a rate per 1,000 females aged 15 to 17 Warwick had the lowest rate of abortions and of live births in the county.

Need for adaptations

On the issue of support needs the JSHMA found that 14% of households have such needs and 11% of these (around 900 households) currently live in unsuitable housing. The most common support needs were for alterations to bathrooms and toilets, for emergency alarms, for help maintaining the home, or for level-access showers. Population growth would add an estimated 3,000 households with a support need over the next twenty years although many of these needs could be met within the existing home.

Current initiatives on help and support needs

Housing options and advice

We have a Housing Advice Team which acts as the first point of contact for people with housing problems. As well as offering advice on a wide range of housing issues and whether the council may be able to provide direct help it is also able to signpost people to other organisations and services operating in the district in appropriate cases. The team manages the Homechoice allocation scheme which is used to select prospective tenants for vacant council and housing association homes and also deals with enquiries from people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Homelessness

The Homelessness Strategy 2015 - 2017 had three objectives:

- Ensuring accessible and effective homelessness and housing advice & support services.
- Providing suitable accommodation for all homeless households.
- Preventing homelessness.

A particular difficulty when the strategy was being drawn up was the likely shortage of resources to deliver many of the actions that were considered desirable and this had to be made clear in the action plan. An additional problem then arose in that the managerial post responsible for taking forward many of the actions was vacant for a substantial proportion of 2015-16 and this inevitably affected our ability to complete a number of the tasks. Nevertheless we made progress on some of the workstreams and a full review of progress on the actions is included in appendix 1.

Specific needs schemes

We are currently building Sayer Court in Royal Leamington Spa with 76 flats for active people aged 55 or more and five bungalows for households that include someone with a disability or mobility issue.

Warwickshire County Council has led on a programme of extra-care provision with an objective of ensuring that there is a scheme in every major town across the county. A 42 home scheme for older people was opened in Warwick in 2013 and a 178 home scheme in Royal Leamington Spa for the same client group opened in 2015. It has not yet been possible to find an appropriate site for a development in Kenilworth but this remains a priority.

A scheme of 15 one-bedroom rented flats for adults with learning difficulties is under construction at Wharf Street in Warwick and is expected to open later in 2016.

Another scheme at Bath Place in Royal Leamington Spa also has planning permission and will in due course provide 16 one-bedroom flats for vulnerable adults with disabilities and there is planning permission for two bungalows in Kenilworth for physically disabled people.

Housing related support

Most housing-related support (HRS) for people with specific needs is delivered through the HRS programme. This scheme is administered by Warwickshire County Council through a partnership arrangement involving all the district councils and other providers of special needs services. This support fits into two broad categories: accommodation-based, where support is provided to customers living in designated accommodation, or floating support where the support worker visits customers in their own homes in the community.

Due to the need to make savings over the last two years, the services being provided under this programme have been subjected to a fundamental review. This culminated in some streamlining and a retendering process for the services identified as being the highest priority but the termination of floating support services on 31st March 2016 for the following client groups:

- Gypsies and travellers
- Single Homeless with support needs
- Homeless families
- Adult offenders
- Young offenders

The transition to the new system is now underway with four new countywide contracts let from 1st August 2016 for:

- Accommodation-based housing related support for homeless and ex-offenders aged 25 or more
- Accommodation-based housing related support for young people aged 16 to 24, including young parents
- Generic floating support for people aged 25 or more
- Floating support for young people aged 16 to 24, including young parents

The five districts/boroughs in Warwickshire have been working with Warwickshire County Council on the development of improved arrangements for the delivery of services to 16 to 24 year olds for several years.

This greater coordination has led to a general improvement in the dialogue between agencies, improved safeguarding and the development of the Warwickshire Protocol for Assessing and Managing the Housing Needs of Homeless Young People.

The five districts and boroughs are now seeking to develop this successful work further through a proposal for the joint recruitment of a policy officer. The role would map existing arrangements and work across the two tiers of local government, the voluntary and community sector and support providers to design and promote the implementation of a joint 'Positive Pathway' to adulthood that supports all of our aspirations for young people.

Better Care Fund

The Better Care Fund (BCF) was announced by the Government in the June 2013 spending round, to drive forward a transformation in integrated health and social care. The fund will be deployed locally on health and social care through pooled budget arrangements between local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups. The Care Act 2014 amended the NHS Act 2006 to provide the legislative basis for the BCF. The planning guidance published on 23rd February 2016 states that "the housing element has been strengthened through the National Conditions, which require local housing authority representatives to be involved in developing and agreeing BCF plans." This marks a new and important role for housing authorities in helping to shape the long-term housing, health and social care agenda and extends beyond consultation about Disability Facilities Grants allocations, which are now channelled through the BCF. In Warwickshire, the BCF is overseen by 'Warwickshire Cares – Better Together', a joint body representing health and local authority bodies. Housing is represented through the Warwickshire Housing Group, with the current lead being Warwick.

Housing Assessment Team

We are currently piloting a collaborative project aimed at creating a new way of delivering housing aids and adaptations and home improvements for disabled and older people in south Warwickshire. It began in January 2014 and also involves Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwickshire County Council.

The objective of the new service is to deliver holistic housing assessment and solutions (including aids and adaptations) to enable residents to live independently at home. This approach represents an expansion of the old service delivered by district councils (primarily focused on just delivering disabled adaptations) to provide a broader range of interventions to support service users to maintain independence and continue living at home. These include:

- the prescription and provision of equipment;
- advice on a range of housing matters including financial benefits, falls prevention, home safety, energy efficiency, accessing charitable funding etc;
- advice and support with alternative housing options including moving.

We are currently evaluating the pilot with a view to determining the way forward.

Housing and the Armed Forces Community Covenant

The armed forces community consists of those who are serving or have served in the Army, Royal Navy, marines or Air Force including reservists, along with their family and dependants.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a national commitment that aims to address the disadvantages potentially faced by the armed forces community. It is supported by more localised Armed Forces Community Covenants, which are voluntary statements of mutual support between local civilian and armed forces communities.

Warwick District Council is a signatory to the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Community Covenant and is fully committed to the principles and aims set out therein: to support the armed forces community and to encourage all those within the civilian community to make it easier for service personnel, their families and veterans to access the help and support they need.

In 2015 we reviewed our housing allocations policy and, among the changes, we updated our approach to applications from members of the armed forces community to ensure that it was in keeping with the principles of the covenant. In particular the armed forces are exempt from our local connection criteria and we have introduced the facility to give increased priority to those with urgent housing needs.

In December 2015 we began a 12 month survey specific to Warwick district to collect information from customers with a connection to the forces that accessed services within the district with a view to building up a picture of the armed forces community and their support needs.

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) is currently working on an e-learning project which will be used to help to train and educate frontline workers, housing and homelessness staff, serving armed forces personnel and their families. The relevant section of the WCC website is also being expanded.