Appendix 1

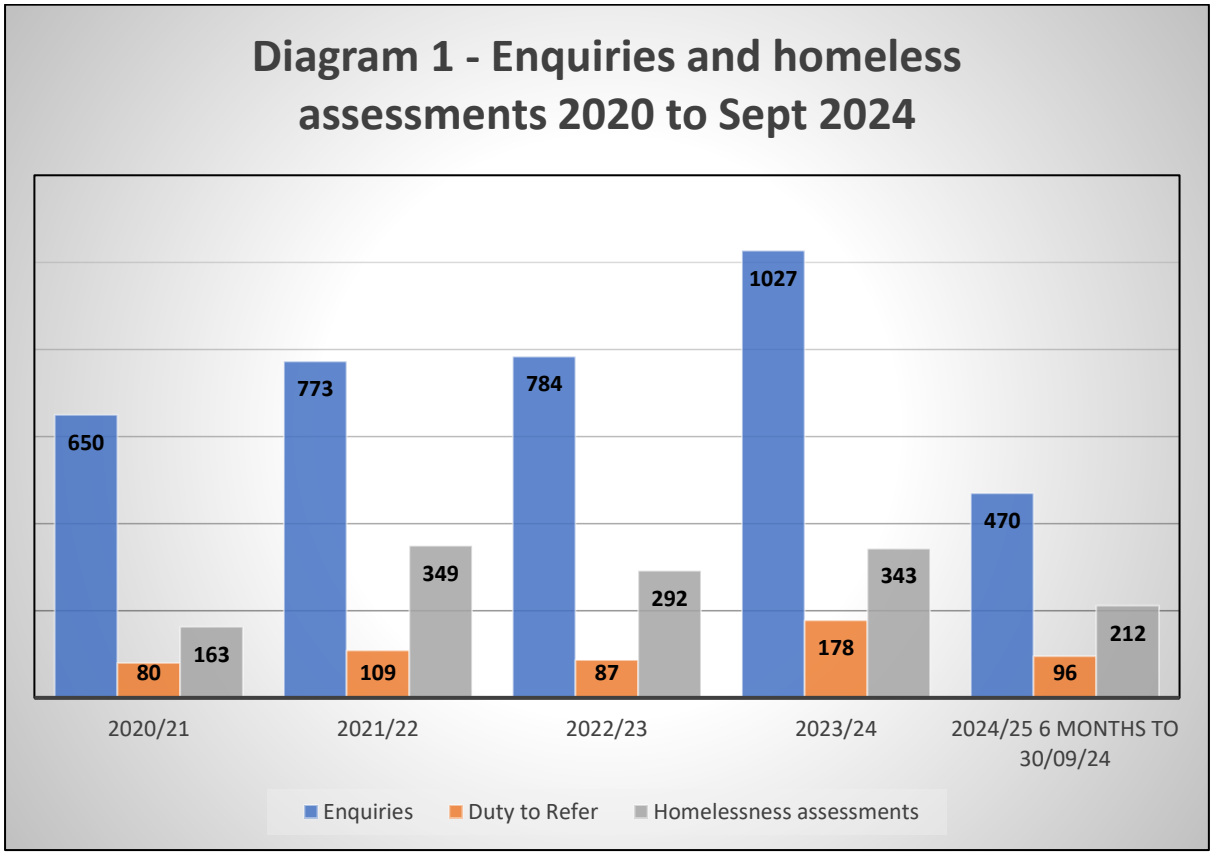
Overview of Homelessness and Housing Advice Service at Fylde Council 2020/21 to 2023/24 and up to 30th September 2024

Enquiries and Homeless Assessments

Local Authorities must have in place an application process for all applicants who require housing assistance and if they have reason to believe that an applicant may be homeless or threatened with homelessness make enquiries to establish if they owe them any duty under Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act. The Homeless Reduction Act introduced a Duty to Refer on certain public bodies, such as Adult and Childrens Social Care, Probation, Police and the NHS to refer service users who they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to a local housing authority.

The local authority has a duty to provide advice and information about homelessness, the rights of homeless people and how to access help and support. A person is homeless if they do not have accommodation that they have a legal right to occupy, which is accessible and physically available to them (and their household) and which it would be reasonable for them to continue to live in.

Diagram 1 details the number of enquiries and duty to refers the housing service at Fylde has received since 2020/21 and the resulting homelessness assessments as a result of the initial enquiry. Between 2020/21 and 2023/24 the service has seen a 37% increase in enquiries received and a 56% increase in Duty to Refer from Statutory partners. As a result of the increase in enquiries the number of homelessness assessments required has increased by 23%. This upwards trend in enquiries and resulting homelessness assessments is continuing into 24/25.



Reasons for loss of last settled accommodation

Table 1 details the main reason persons provide when the initially approach the service for advice. Rows highlighted in red detail the main reasons. Section 21 notices or no fault evictions where tenancies are ended within the private rented sector, has since 2020/21 been the main reason for applicants approaching the service, closely followed by applicants being asked to leave by family. Rows highlighted in orange and green detail other reasons households are approaching the service.

Table 1: Main reasons for approaching the service for assistance given

Main reason	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 6 months to 30/09/24	Total
Section 21 notice	33	160	195	174	59	621
Asked to leave by family	69	81	88	81	24	343
Fleeing Domestic Abuse	20	46	50	51	18	185
Relationship breakdown	24	28	30	36	11	129
Sofa surfing	26	31	38	12	15	122
Illegal eviction/loss of accommodation	10	37	24	39	11	121
Property not fit for habitation/detrimental to health	4	28	25	25	6	88
Fleeing Harassment	23	15	15	26	1	80
General housing advice - Landlord/tenant rights, downsizing due to bedroom tax, rehousing options, affordability	17	20	22	19	1	79
Section 8 notice	0	7	34	15	7	63
Friends no longer willing to accommodate	11	14	17	16	5	63
Rough Sleeping	9	10	17	14	10	60
Rent arrears private and social rented sector	6	14	8	25	5	58
Affordability of current home	7	9	10	23	6	55
Overcrowding asked to leave	1	8	20	12	4	45
Violent relationship breakdown	14	10	8	4	0	36
Mortgage repossession	0	5	22	5	2	34
Leaving prison/bail hostel	4	8	4	12	3	31

Leaving armed forces	3	6	10	5	2	26
Leaving Home Office Asylum Seeker accommodation	0	4	8	11	3	26
Hospital discharge psychiatric unit	7	6	5	5	1	24
Tied accommodation	1	5	7	6	2	21
Hospital discharge/home not suitable	4	1	4	6	5	20
Abandoned last settled accommodation	5	6	1	6	1	19
Evicted supported housing/ready to move on from support	1	5	2	8	2	18
Emergency Fire/Flood/Disaster	4	4	0	5	1	14
Care leaver	2	4	0	4	3	13
Bail conditions unable to return home	0	1	4	5	1	11
Removed by Police	1	6	0	1	1	9
Ukraine scheme asked to leave	0	0	2	1	0	3

Since 2020/21, 88 households have approached the service as the property has been deemed not fit for habitation or is detrimental to health. In these instances the homeless team will refer to Private Sector Enforcement to request an inspection of the property under HHSRS (Housing, Health and safety Ratings System) under the Housing Act 2004. Table 2 below details the enforcement activity of the Private Sector Team within the Housing Service since 2021/22 and the number of notices served. The main hazards identified under private sector enforcement are damp and mould, excess cold and fire hazards.

From April 2022 to March 2024 utilising funding from the Homeless Prevention Grant the service operated a proactive private sector inspection programme in partnership with the Fire Service and Environmental Health. This resulted in 175 notices being served per annum to require Landlords to address identified hazards within their accommodation. In 2024/25 it has not been possible to continue with the proactive inspection programme, however this is something the service wish to re-establish moving forward.

Table 2: Private sector enforcement activity

	Number of Inspections undertaken within private sector homes	**Number of notice served as a result of an inspection**
2021/22	178	86
2022/23	493	175
2023/24	332	175
2024/25 6 months up to Sept 24	96	34

Table 3 details as part of the homelessness assessment undertaken with Officers, the main reason for loss of last settled tenancy. This reflects the information in Table 1 with Section 21 notices, friends or family no longer able to accommodate, victim of domestic abuse, relationship breakdown and loss of social housing tenancy as a result of ASB and rent arrears being the main reasons. The service is also seeing an increase in applicants leaving institutional care, their last accommodation – custody, asylum seeker accommodation, hospital and supported accommodation.

Table 3: Main reasons for loss of last settled accommodation

	2022/23	2023/24	24/25 6 months up to 30/09/24	Total
End of private sector tenancy	**154**	**131**	**77**	**362**
Friends/family no longer willing to accommodate	**70**	**66**	**29**	**165**
Victim of Domestic Abuse	**49**	**49**	**21**	**119**
Relationship breakdown (non-violent)	**33**	**30**	**8**	**71**
End of social rented tenancy	9	16	9	34
Leaving Asylum Seeker Accommodation	6	9	4	19
Eviction from supported accommodation	4	8	5	17
Departure from custody	5	9	2	16
Property disrepair	6	5	4	15
Motivated violence or harassment	3	7	2	12
Departure from Hospital	3	5	4	12
Home no longer suitable due to disability/ill health	5	5	0	10
Alledged Perpetrator of Domestic Abuse	0	6	2	8
Mortgage repossession/sale of proeprty	3	4	2	9
Left accommodation voluntarily	3	3	3	9
Left HM Forces accommodation	3	2	2	7
Fire/Flood	2	3	1	6
Loss of tied accommodation	0	2	2	4
End of Ukraine Family Scheme	1	1	1	3
Looked after child	1	1	1	3
Racially motivated violence	0	1	0	1

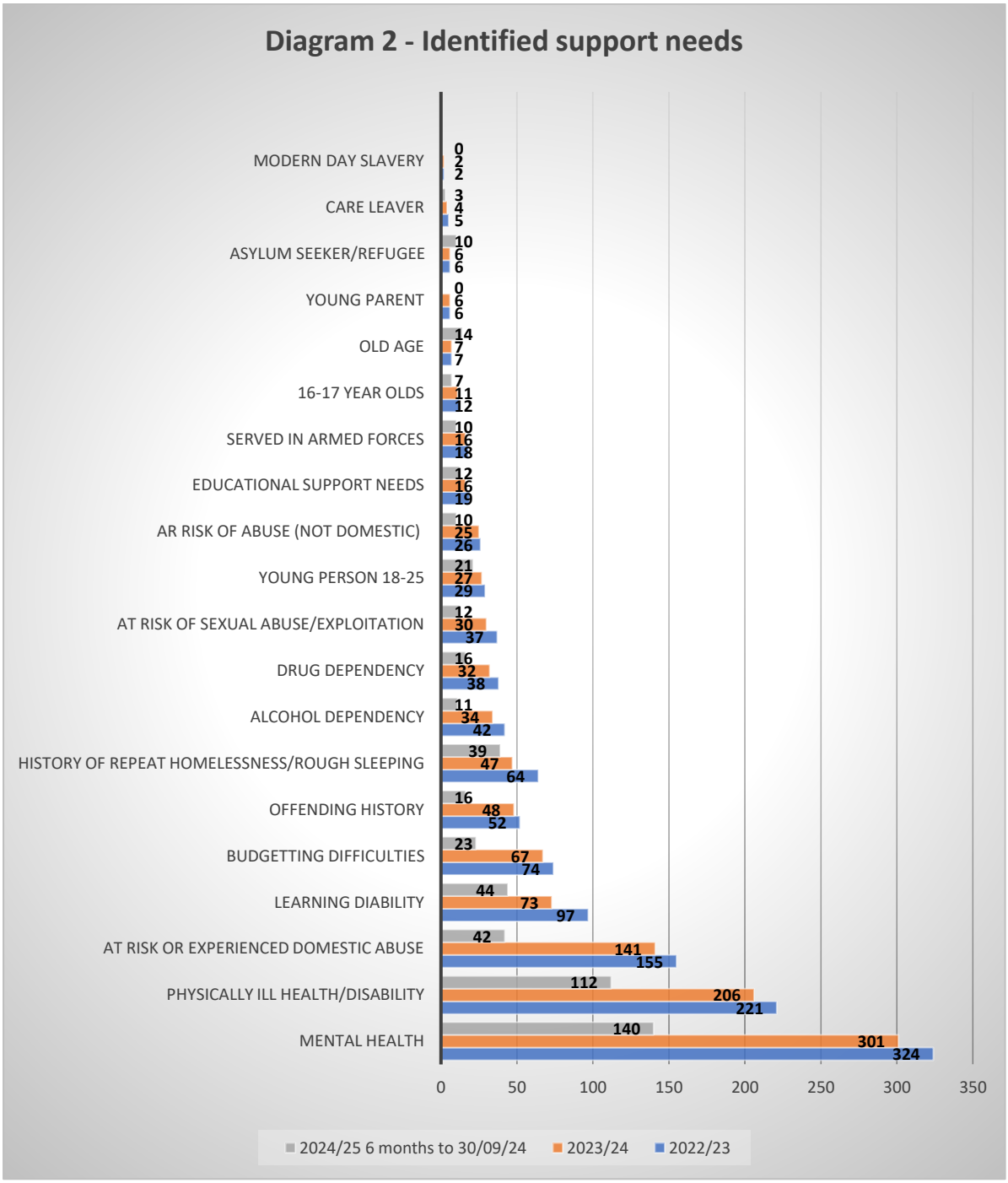
Support needs of applicants

The homelessness assessment process identifies support needs of an applicants, either to prevent them losing their home or helping them to find another home and sustaining a tenancy. This holistic approach to identifying support needs, informs an individual's Personal Housing Plan and actions that the Local Authority and the individual should take to prevent or relieve homelessness. This can include referrals to social services and other support agencies, undertaking tenancy training course, GP appointments and actions to secure a tenancy within the social or private rented sector. The Personal Housing Plan is an essential step in relieving homelessness and it details the actions the Local Authority and the Person should undertake. The actions are reviewed regulary.

Diagram 2 details for applicants whom a full homelessness assessment has been completed support needs in addition to homelessness. Applicants will have several support needs, for example an applicant who has mental health support needs, may also have physical ill health or a disability and drug or alcohol dependency.

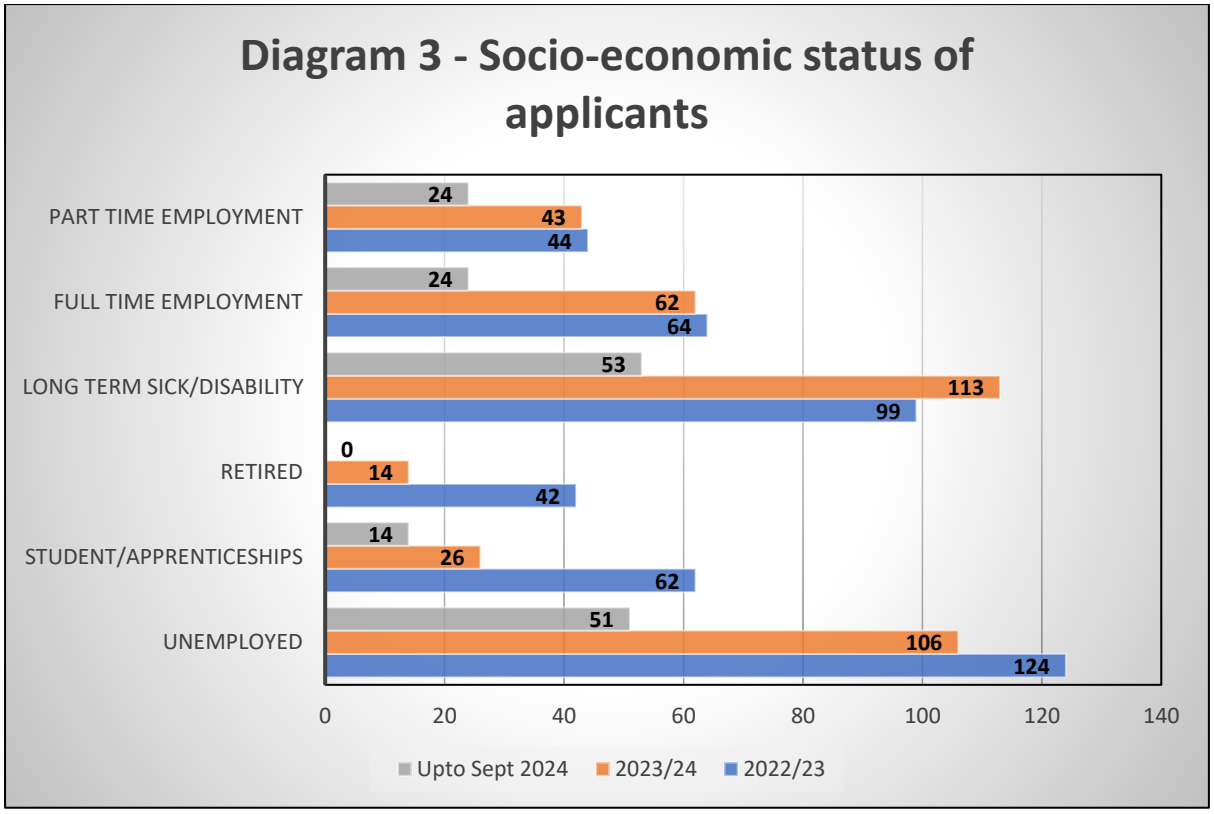
The service supports a high number of individuals with mental health needs, in physical ill health and registered disabled. Other areas where support needs are high are clients at risk of or experienced

domestic abuse, learning difficulties , offending history and at risk of repeat homelessness and rough sleeping.



Socio-economic status of applicants

The service supports a range of clients with different socio-economic backgrounds. **Diagram 3** illustrates the equal split between households with a third being in employment, a third unemployed and a third long term sick or with a disability. This split has remained fairly consistent since 2023/24 and is continuing into 24/25.



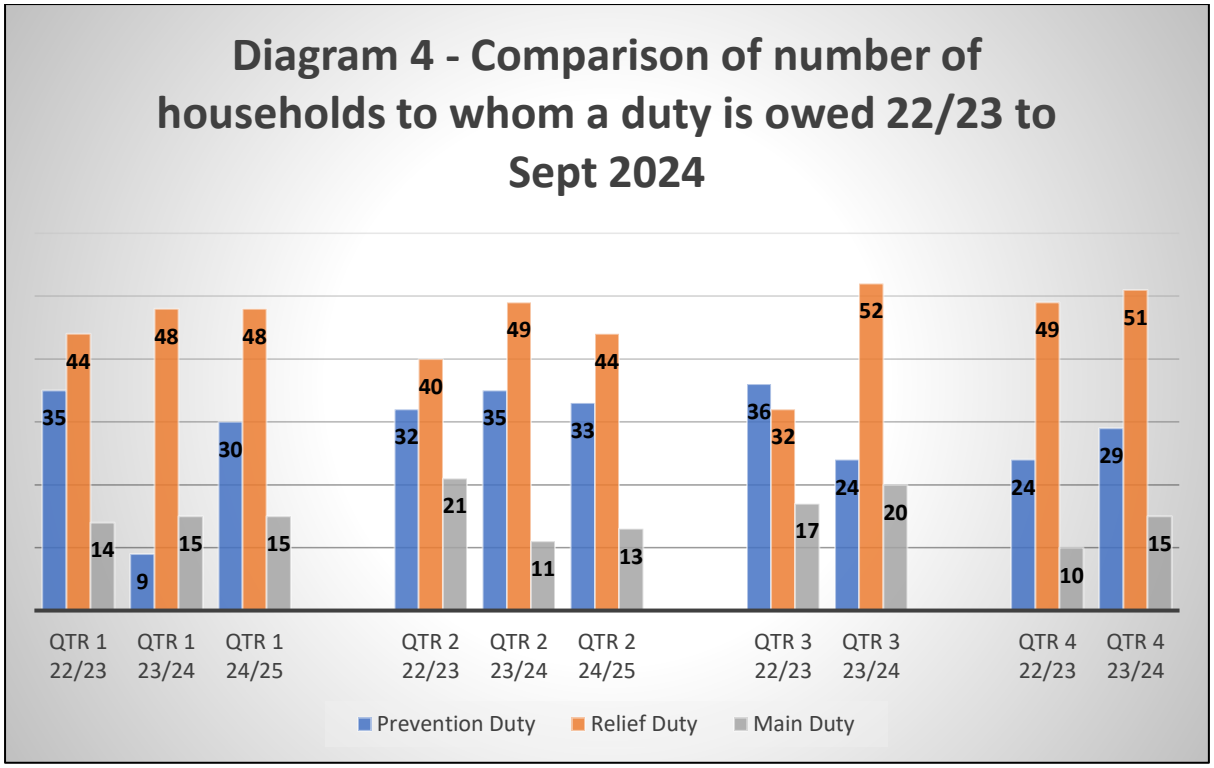
Prevention, Relief and Main Housing Duty

Under the Homeless Reduction Act 2018 the Local Authority must accept either a Prevention or Relief Housing Duty towards all households who are at risk of homelessness. As part of the Prevention Duty we will support households to either remain in their own home by negotiating with the Landlord or assist them into a new home. If we have been unable to prevent homelessness within a 56 day period, the duty can either be extended or applicants move into a Relief Housing Duty.

Support continues to be provided during a 56 days relief period and if clients remain homeless, applicants in Priority Need move into Main Housing Duty. Applicants not in Priority Need we will extend the Relief Duty if they are actively engaging to resolve their homelessness situation, or end the Relief Duty after 56 days. The Local Authority is not required to provide interim accommodation to applicants who are not classed as being in Priority Need.

Diagram 4 details the number of applicants to whom the Local Authority has accepted a Prevention, Relief and Main Housing Duty since 2022. The service continues to be successful in resolving an applicant's homelessness while in Prevention or Relief Housing Duty stages and the numbers of applicants who the Local Authority goes on to accept a Main Housing Duty remain on average around 15 households per annum.

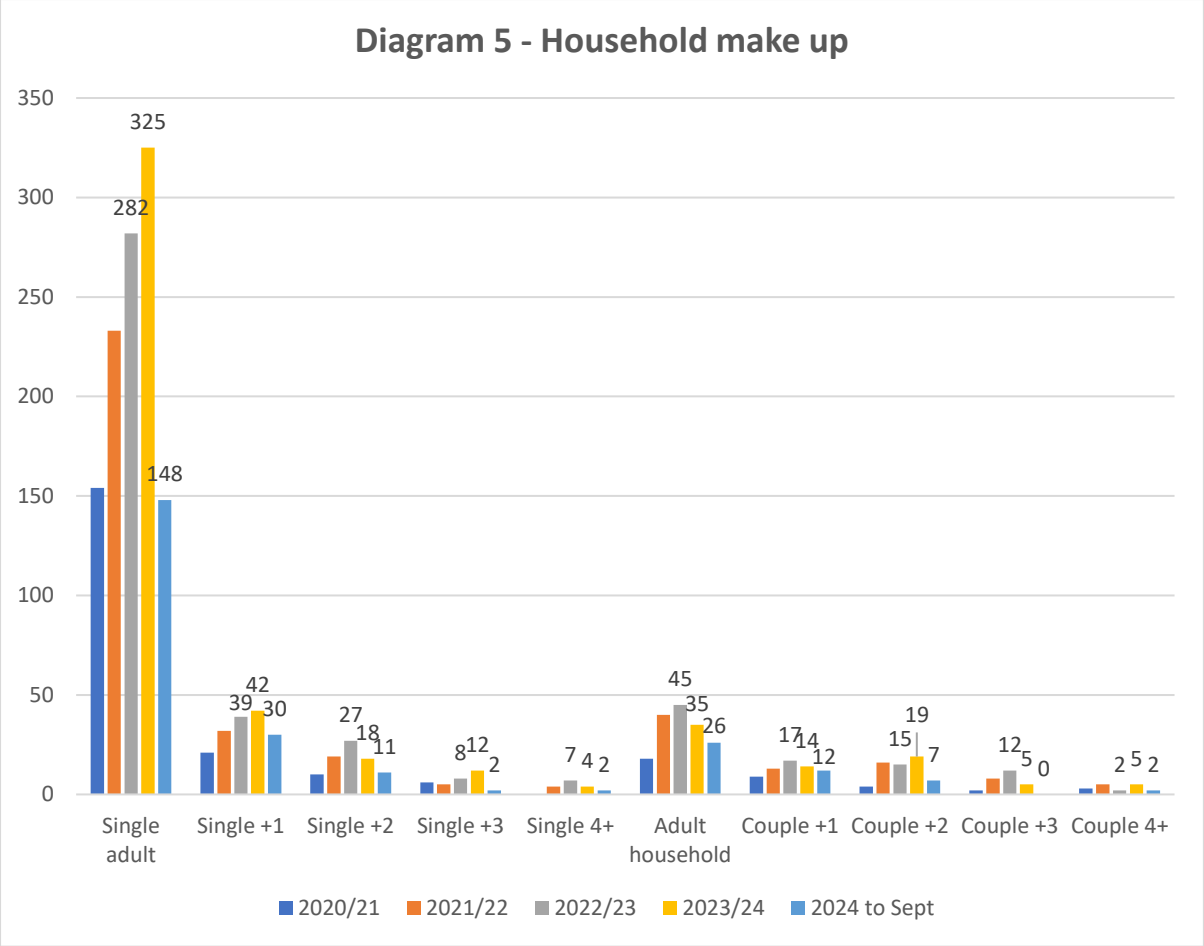
Ideally the service needs to prevent homelessness when a Prevention Duty is owed, however due to lack of move on options and households presenting as homeless too late for prevention work to be successful, the service continues to see on average per quarter 46 households to whom a Relief Duty is accepted and a lower figure were a Prevention Duty is owed, 29 households.



Household Make up

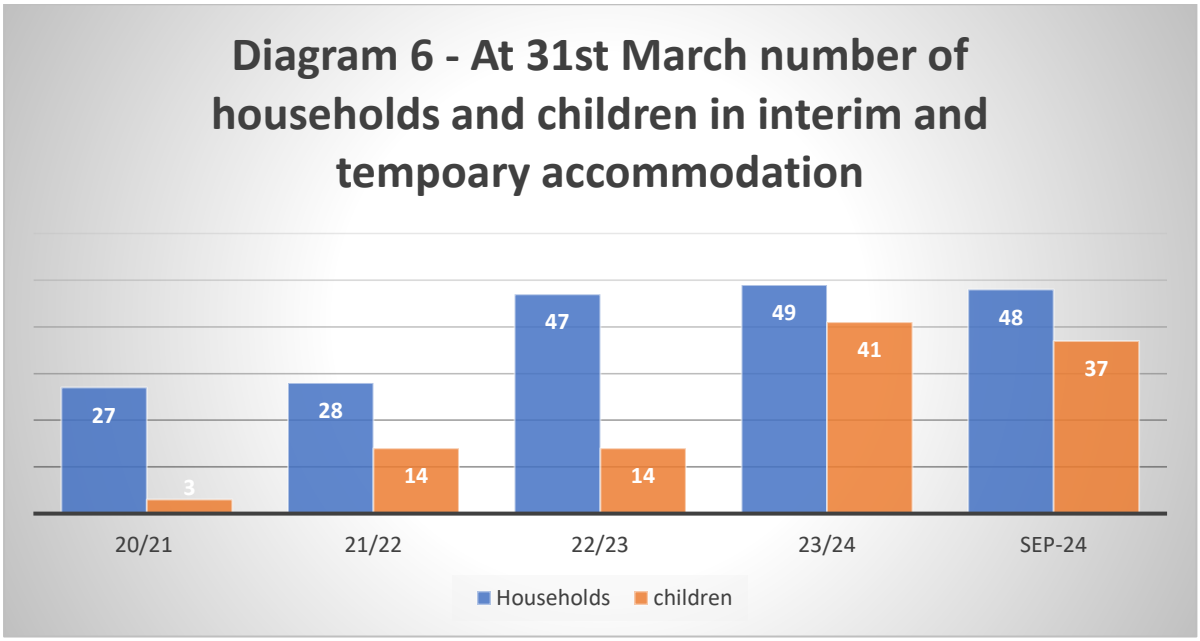
Diagram 5 details the make-up of households approaching the service. The service continues to see high numbers of single clients approaching for support with complex support needs as illustrated in Diagram 3. The service has also seen an increase in families with children approaching as homeless in the main due to section 21 notice to end the private sector tenancy.

Move on options for families and single households is restricted due to lack of suitable and affordable accommodation within both the social and private rented sector. The increase in families with children is as a result of the ending of no fault evictions within the private rented sector as landlords choose to leave the sector and all accommodation on the open market. In the majority of these cases negotiation with the Landlord to prevent homelessness has not been successful either because the Landlord wishes to sell, or the household has approached the service too late for prevention work to be successful to sustain the tenancy.



Households and children in temporary accommodation

Diagram 6 details at the 31st March in the years 2020/21 to 2023/24 and at the end of September 24 the number of households in temporary accommodation and the number of children.



Since 2020/21 the service has seen since 2022/23 to 2023/24 and 2024/25 a 56% increase in homeless presentations. Unfortunately this has led to a 72% increase in the number of children in temporary homeless accommodation in 2023/24 and 2024/25 compared with an average of children in temporary accommodation from 2020/21 to 2022/23. This is most likely as a direct result of the loss of accommodation via Section 21 notice (No Fault Evictions) in the private rented sector, as detailed in Tables 1 and 2.

Temporary accommodation and Move on Options

Under the 1996 Housing Act, a local authority must provide interim accommodation (Interim Housing Duty) while it makes its inquiries into a homeless application if it has reason to believe that the applicant may be:

a. Homeless
b. Eligible for assistance
c. In priority need

If the Local Authority has been unable to relieve a person's homelessness during the Relief Duty stage who are classed as being in Priority Need, the accommodation provided moves from Interim Accommodation and becomes a 'dwelling' and applicants have protection under the Protection from Eviction Act 1977. The Local Authority accepts a Section 193, Temporary Accommodation Duty. In conducting their enquiries the Local Authority concludes a household is Intentionally Homeless, the Relief Duty will end at 56 days and this includes households in Priority Need.

The numbers of households approaching the service has impacted on the requirement for temporary accommodation within the borough. In 2024/25 the service has increased the supply of temporary units from 10 units leased from Progress Housing to 31 units.

Working in partnership with the YMCA we have secured 12 flats for 18 to 25 years olds to whom the Local Authority holds a homelessness duty, where support is provided on site to ensure the appropriate support is in place and source move on accommodation. These additional units have helped to address the limited supply of one bedroom temporary accommodation available in the borough and reduce the reliance on out of area B&B placement.

In August 2023 Fylde Council were successful in bidding for LAHF2 (Local Authority Housing Fund – Phase 2) and DLUHC approved Fylde Council's proposal to provide 12 homes under LAHF2 with a grant of £1,257,600. This as matched funded from Section 106 funds (Developer Contribution) totalling £1,526,400. Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MofU) Fylde Council agreed to deliver:

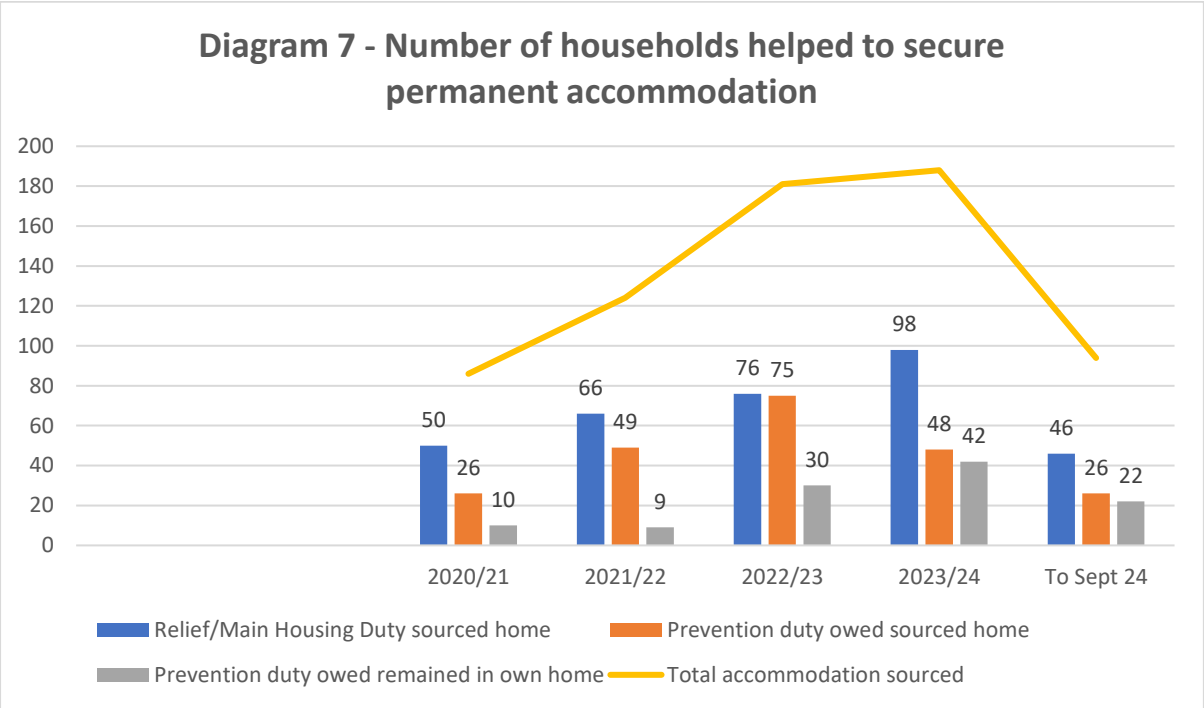
1. 4 properties for households that meet the resettlement scheme eligibility criteria under the ACRS (Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme)
2. 8 properties to be allocated to households that meet the Temporary Accommodation element eligibility criteria.

Fylde Council are hopeful we will exceed these targets and deliver 6 properties under the ACRS scheme and 9 units of temporary accommodation.

These additional units has helped the address the needs of households in Priority Need, by providing suitable, self-contained temporary accommodation.

The service works hard to move households on from temporary accommodation and in January 2024, the service re-structured to introduce a separate Moving On Service that focusses solely on households in temporary accommodation to encourage them to resolve their current homelessness

situation. **Diagram 7** details the numbers of households assisted to source accommodation while either in Prevention, Relief or Main Duty stages of homelessness.



Despite the increase since 20/21 of homeless presentations annually, the service continues to perform well to source suitable move on accommodation. Compared against homelessness assessments undertaken from presentations in Diagram 1, the service on average is able to source secure accommodation for over 50% of these applicants either by securing new accommodation or assisting the household to remain in their own home with a 6 month tenancy. All households to whom the Local Authority owe a Main Housing Duty as they are in Priority need would be assisted to source move on accommodation.

Conclusions

1. The number of households approaching the service at risk of homelessness continues to increase annually. Since 2020/21 the service has seen a 37% increase in enquiries received and a 56% increase in Duty to Refer from Statutory partners. The service expects to receive 1000 enquiries per annum, and approximately 50% of these will require a full homelessness assessment and support to source permanent move on accommodation.
2. The main reasons for persons approaching the service is as a result of receiving a Section 21 notice to end a private sector tenancy or being asked to leave by family or friends.
3. The service is seeing an increase in persons approaching the service as a result of domestic abuse and leaving institutional care, such as Custody or Asylum Seeker accommodation.
4. Support needs of clients are increasingly complex. The service supports a high number of individuals with mental health needs, in physical ill health and registered disabled. Other areas where support needs are high are clients at risk of or experienced domestic abuse, learning difficulties , offending history and at risk of repeat homelessness and rough sleeping.
5. Despite the level of support needs from persons at risk of homelessness the service supports a range of clients with different socio-economic backgrounds with a third of households being in employment, a third unemployed and a third suffering from a long term sick or with a disability.
6. The service has seen an increase in families with children approaching as homeless due to section 21 notice to end the private sector tenancy. Since 2020/21 the service has seen since a 56% increase in homeless presentations in 2023/24 and 2024/25 which has led to a 72% increase in the number of children in temporary homeless accommodation.
7. The numbers of households in Interim or Temporary accommodation remains high and at the 30th September 2024 we had 48 households in temporary accommodation.
8. Move on options for families and single households is restricted due to lack of suitable and affordable opportunities for accommodation within both the social and private rented sector.
9. The increase in homelessness assessments required following approach for advice has naturally increased the number of households to whom the local authority owe a Prevention or Relief Homelessness Duty.
10. Comparing the number of Households in Prevention, Relief or Main Housing Duty at the 31st March each year since 2022/23, the service continues to be successful in resolving an applicant's homelessness while in Prevention or Relief Housing Duty, with the number of households moving into Main Housing Duty remaining at around 15 households.
11. The service continues to perform well to source suitable move on accommodation for households. Compared against homelessness assessments undertaken from presentations in Diagram 1, the service on average is able to source secure accommodation for over 50% of applicants, either by securing new accommodation or assisting the household to remain in their own home with a 6 month tenancy.
12. The service has increased the number of units available in Fylde for temporary homeless accommodation from 10 to 31 units. The existing arrangements with Progress Housing for 10 units remain in place. This has been added to with 12 units in a partnership with the YMCA providing specialist support from 18 to 25 year olds and under the LAHF2 funding provided by DLUHC, an additional 9 units will have been provided by the end of 2024/25.