

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee

Date: 24 July 2025

Subject: Homelessness Update

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Responsible Director: Richard Shwe, Director of Housing

SUMMARY

Homelessness is a national crisis and along with other Local Authorities, the Council is facing serious budget pressures from homelessness and temporary accommodation. This report provides a summary of homelessness activity in 2024/25 the measures that are in place to manage the temporary accommodation budget pressures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the Committee to note and comment on the report.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Corporate Plan and the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	A priority for the homelessness service is to work with households to help them maximise their income and independence.
Creating a compassionate and inclusive council	Homelessness can happen to anyone. Officers work with households to assess their housing needs and identify the housing options which may be available to them based on their individual circumstances.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	Officers follow the Homelessness Code of Guidance when placing households into temporary accommodation. Accommodation needs are discussed with applicants to ensure temporary accommodation placements are suitable.

Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The Council has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households in priority need. A review of temporary accommodation supply and procurement will ensure temporary accommodation provision is as cost effective as possible.
Taking pride in H&F	The Council aims to achieve the best outcomes for homeless applicants and to perform well in meeting the Council's homelessness duties.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	As with all homes, we take care to only provide temporary accommodation in high quality and decent homes, which meet energy efficiency standards.

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Homelessness Demand

1. During 2024/25, 3,000 households approached the Council as homeless. The three main reasons for homelessness are family/friends eviction, loss of private rented accommodation and domestic abuse.
2. Of the 3,000 households approaching the Council as homeless, 547 were placed into temporary accommodation (TA) during the year. On 31 March 2025, there were 1,511 households in TA, which is a 4% increase on the previous year.

Temporary accommodation budget pressures

3. In 2024/25, the TA budget was under significant pressure with a forecasted overspend of £7.7m. A series of measures were put in place which reduced the overspend to £6.4m at year end.
4. The service continues to deliver an action plan to manage the ongoing TA budget pressures. The action plan has three objectives:
 - i. to reduce the new flow into TA by preventing homelessness when households first approach
 - ii. to move households in the most expensive TA to less expensive provision and procure more lower cost TA provision
 - iii. to increase the flow out of TA by increasing the number of households rehoused into settled accommodation.

Reducing the new flow of homeless households into TA at first approach

5. Making early contact with homeless applicants when they first approach the service and spending more time with them to help them find an alternative housing solution is essential for preventing homelessness. Private rented accommodation is one of the main housing options for applicants to prevent homelessness and 43 households have been supported into private rented accommodation since 1 April.
6. The Homelessness Service is implementing a triage appointment service for new homeless approaches. Applicants who are homeless on the day will be interviewed that day; other applicants will receive an appointment within a week. Interviews will be a mix of face-to-face and telephone, with a focus on meeting face-to-face at the reception of 145 King Street. Moving to an appointment service will allow a greater focus on preventing homelessness and maximise the time available for applicants to find alternative accommodation before having to leave their current home.

Increasing the flow out of TA

7. During 2024/25, 290 homeless households were rehoused into permanent accommodation, this was 43.8% of lettings. Homeless households will continue to be allocated a proportion of lettings that maintains a flow of households out of TA.
8. The homelessness legislation includes the option of discharging the main housing duty by making offers of privately rented accommodation. When officers issue a main housing duty decision, the decision letter advises applicants that they will receive one suitable offer of accommodation which may be an offer of social housing or a private rented property.
9. Offers of private rented accommodation will be introduced from July, and a target has been set to rehouse 120 applicants out of TA into private rented tenancies by 31 March 2026.
10. A number of council led new build schemes are due for completion this year. All of these schemes have local lettings plans in place which give priority access to applicants living within the locality of the scheme and should help to increase the availability of housing to rehouse homeless applicants, which will again help to increase the flow out of TA.

Conclusion

11. Hammersmith and Fulham, like many other London boroughs, is facing challenges with the total volume of homelessness approaches and the rising costs of TA. However, through improvements in the initial point of contact and putting in place measures to manage temporary accommodation budgets, the Council is proactively managing the challenge. This will lead to better outcomes for applicants and protect the Council's budget.